



# Marion County Board of County Commissioners Marion County Fire Rescue

2631 SE 3rd Street  
Ocala, FL 34471

[www.marioncountyfl.org/firerescue.htm](http://www.marioncountyfl.org/firerescue.htm)



Contact: Heather Danenhower, Public Relations Manager, Marion County Fire Rescue  
Office: (352) 291-8094 ▪ Pager: (352) 898-3570

## **MANDATORY BURN BAN LIFTED IN MARION** Immediate Release

**MARION COUNTY, Fla.** (April 15, 2009) – Recent rain prompted the Marion County Multi-Agency Wildland Task Force to lift the mandatory burn ban in Marion County, effective immediately. However, firefighters still urge citizens to use caution when burning outdoors. Task force members may recommend another mandatory burn ban in the near future, if conditions don't continue to improve. The ban was in effect since March 16.

Over the last several days, Marion County has received between one and two inches of rain. This lowered the drought index by more than 100 points. Marion County's current drought index ranges from 499 to the mid 500s. The drought index is based on a scale from 0 to 800 with 800 considered the most severe threat.

While the mandatory burn ban has lifted, citizens must follow very specific guidelines to burn safely and legally. If citizens do not precisely follow every guideline, they will face a \$50 fine for the first offense and \$130 for subsequent offenses – no exceptions. A person who starts a backyard burn is also ultimately responsible for any damage it may cause. Task force members will continue to monitor wildfire conditions and plan to meet again on Monday, April 20 at the Marion County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management Office.

### **Marion County's Backyard Burning Guidelines (also visit [www.marioncountyfl.org/firerescue.htm](http://www.marioncountyfl.org/firerescue.htm))**

- Clear an area to bare soil and remove all flammable materials around the pile, including grass, to prevent the fire from spreading into unburned areas. This pile cannot exceed eight feet in diameter.
- Make sure the burn pile is 25 feet from your home and other combustible structures, 25 feet from forest or brush, 50 feet from paved public roadways and 150 feet from neighboring structures. (Note: 150 feet is half the size of a football field. Most people who live in subdivisions will not meet these setbacks.)
- Burn only yard waste that is generated on your property and consists of grass clippings, tree limbs, scrub trimmings, palm fronds and other brush. Citizens may not burn household garbage, paper products, plastics, treated wood or construction materials among other items.
- Monitor weather forecasts and delay backyard burning during windy conditions, red flag warnings or burn bans.
- Physically remain in the presence of your burn pile at all times, and make sure it doesn't produce smoke, soot, odors, heat, flames or other conditions that create a nuisance to others.
- Start burning after 9 a.m. and extinguish the burn pile one hour before sunset.
- As an alternative to backyard burning, take yard debris to Marion County's landfills and recycling centers. Citizens may call (352) 671-8465 for more information.

###