



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Fire Rescue

2631 SE Third St.
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: 352-291-8000
Fax: 352-291-8098

Contact: Miranda Iglesias, Public Information Officer, Marion County Fire Rescue
Office: 352-291-8094 ▪ Pager: 352-898-3570 ▪ E-mail: miranda.iglesias@marioncountyfl.org

TASK FORCE TO RECOMMEND LIFTING THE MANDATORY BURN BAN

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (June 29, 2011) – After receiving significant amounts of rainfall in Marion County, the Marion County Multi-agency Wildland Task Force will recommend the mandatory burn ban be lifted on Thursday, June 30 at 8 a.m.

While large portions of Marion County have received rainfall, there are a few dry areas that still have seen little to no rain. Also, firefighters with Marion County Fire Rescue, the Florida Division of Forestry and Ocala National Forest will continue to monitor and mop-up four active fires in Marion County. Two of the active fires are in a swamp and dry lake bed, both requiring at least five to six inches of rain. Due to dry conditions, the Wildland Task Force will continue to meet to monitor weather conditions and patterns over the next few months.

Although it will be legal to burn yard debris, Wildland Task Force members are urging residents to delay backyard burning and take yard debris to Marion County's landfill or recycling centers, a safer alternative to backyard burning. Citizens should call 352-671-8465 for more information. If residents choose to burn, Wildland Task Force members recommend you abide by Marion County's backyard burning guidelines to ensure your safety.

- Use a non-combustible container to contain your fire.
- Make sure the burn pile is 150 feet from neighboring structures, 50 feet from paved public roadways and 25 feet from homes and other structures, forests and brush.
- Clear an area to bare soil and remove all flammables eight feet in diameter around the pile.
- If found violating Marion County's backyard burning guidelines, residents could face a \$50 fine for the first offense and \$130 for all subsequent offenses.

With the Fourth of July only a few days away, it is important to remember any fireworks that explode, leave the ground or shoot projectiles are illegal in Florida. MCFR firefighters recommend you use the following tips to have a safe and legal holiday.

- Attend a professional firework display.
- Do not purchase or ignite illegal fireworks (anything that leaves the ground, explodes or shoots projectiles is illegal in Florida, including firecrackers, bottle rockets, shells, mortars, Roman candles and M80s).
- Ignite sparklers and other legal novelties outdoors on a flat, hard surface in an open area away from grass and other combustibles.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or water hose handy just in case an emergency arises.
- Soak used fireworks in water for at least 15 minutes before throwing them away.
- Never experiment with or make homemade fireworks.
- Call 911 immediately if someone gets hurt or burned or if a fire erupts.

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"Meeting Needs by Exceeding Expectations"