

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 14, 2026  
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## Wisconsin Experiencing Critical Fire Danger May 14-16

*DNR Burn Permits Suspended In 31 Counties*

■ *Fire danger is expected to reach Critical levels across Northern Wisconsin Thursday, May 14 through Saturday, May 16. The public is asked to avoid outdoor burning activities until conditions improve. / Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR*

**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) asks the public to avoid outdoor burning activities, as fire danger has reached Critical levels across Northern and Western Wisconsin Thursday, May 14 through the evening of Saturday, May 16.

In conjunction with the National Weather Service, a Red Flag Warning is forecast for Friday, May 15 from noon to 9 p.m. in the following counties: Douglas, Bayfield, Washburn, Burnett, Sawyer, Ashland, Iron, Rusk, Barron, Polk and Vilas.

As of Thursday, May 14, DNR burning permits are suspended in 31 counties. Additional suspensions are possible with worsening conditions forecast heading into the weekend. [Find updated information on DNR burning permit suspensions on the DNR's WisBurn tool.](#)

Fire risk is increased by ongoing dry vegetation, low humidity, warming temperatures and gusty winds forecast heading into the weekend, with Very High fire danger anticipated in areas where vegetation has not fully greened up.

Wisconsin's fire season is currently at its annual peak, as pine trees in areas with sandy soils are extremely vulnerable to "crown fires," wherein flames move from the ground to the tree tops and spread with intensity. Recent rains have not minimized wildfire concerns, as grasses, pine needles and leaf litter can dry out in just a few days between precipitation events, creating hazardous conditions.

As elevated fire risks persist, the DNR will continue to suspend all DNR-issued burn permits for debris piles and broadcast burning until widespread rain occurs. The DNR has responded to nearly 500 wildfires thus far in 2026, with 45% of those caused by debris burning.

### **Take Action To Help Prevent Wildfires**

Embers from any recent fires, especially burn piles and campfires, can easily get out of control and cause a wildfire if not properly extinguished. Please avoid all burning in areas of concern, including warming or cooking fires, until conditions improve.

Outdoor enthusiasts should also be extra careful with off-road vehicles or equipment that can create a spark and start a fire. With dry weather conditions across much of the state, fires can spark at any time.

Follow these simple tips to prevent wildfires from getting out of control:

- Avoid outdoor burning, including campfires, until conditions improve.
- Operate equipment (chainsaws, off-road vehicles, lawnmowers, etc.) early in the morning or late in the day to avoid sparks at peak burn hours.
- Secure dragging trailer chains.
- Report fires early and call 911.

Check current fire danger, wildfire reports and burning restrictions on the DNR's website.