



The Forestland Burning Guide

What the landowner needs to know

May 2019

Protection from Fire Program

Scope and Purpose

The policy of the State of Oregon is to improve the use of prescribed burning as a responsible forest management and protection practice, and to minimize emissions consistent with the air quality objectives of the federal Clean Air Act and Oregon's Clean Air Act Implementation Plan.

The implementation plan has two aims: (1) minimize smoke from prescribed burns to keep it from reaching unhealthy levels in smoke-sensitive receptor areas, or SSRAs (designated cities or populated areas), as well as other areas determined to be sensitive to smoke, and (2) provide maximum opportunity for essential forestland burning.

Burn procedure summary

To set up a prescribed burn, a landowner or burn boss should draw up a plan that takes into account:

- How weather will be monitored
- How the burn will be conducted to minimize smoke from entering an SSRA or other area sensitive to smoke
- Resources required to ignite the burn and to prevent it from becoming a wildfire

The local Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) or Fire Protective Association forester may require a written plan to address the above concerns before issuing a burn permit.

The forester will also collect information about the site to be burned and register it in the Oregon Smoke Management Data System. More information will be collected and entered into the data system when the burn unit is planned for ignition, and after the burn is completed.

Burn registration

Unless the forester waives the requirement, all prescribed burning on forestland within a protection district must be registered seven days prior to the ignition.

Information needed for registration includes: name of landowner, location and size of the unit, type of burn,

fuel loading, and reason for the burn. A registration fee of \$0.50 per acre is required on all federal forestland, and on private forestland west of the Cascade crest. No fee is required for private burning east of the Cascades. For small burns, a minimum fee of \$30 is required.

Planning a burn

Once the burn registration and written plan are complete, the burn unit can be planned. The landowner or burn boss may call the local forestry office up to the morning of the desired burn day.

The burn boss must provide to the district specific information about the unit, such as location, method of burning, fuel-loading tonnages and ignition time.

Usually, final approval of the burn will not be made until after 2:30 p.m. the day before the desired burn date, when ODF will have issued the smoke management forecast and instructions.

Once final approval is given, a permit is issued. The permit lists:

- Burn site information
- Conditions for burning
- Allowed burning dates and hours

The more communication and early planning between the landowner and the local forester, the greater the chance for a successful burn opportunity.

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Conducting a burn

Just prior to burning a unit, the burn boss must verify that actual on-site conditions are consistent with the forecasted weather.

The burn boss must also monitor the burn after it has begun. If it appears that smoke will significantly affect an SSRA or other area sensitive to smoke, or is already affecting an SSRA, the burn boss must end the burn in a way that does not compromise worker safety or the ability to prevent escape of the burn.

Upon ending a prescribed burn, the residual fire should be put out as soon as possible. No additional burning should be attempted until approval is received from the forester.

Once the unit has been burned, details about how much fuel burned, ignition and weather information must be provided by the next business day to the forester. This will be entered into the smoke management data system.



When weather and wind conditions are optimum, smoke from forest burning will be minimized, reducing impact to communities.

The landowner will be charged a burn fee after the burn according to burn type and acres registered. The fee will occur after the first time the unit is ignited. The fees are \$0.50 per acre for landing and right-of-way burning, and \$3.10 per acre for all other burning. If landings and other types of burning are done in the same unit, the landings are charged at \$0.50 per acre, and the other registered burning is charged at \$2.60 per acre.

There is no charge for subsequent burning unless the unit is burned more than two calendar years after the year registered.

Conclusion

The success of the smoke management program depends on landowners and representatives of the State Forester. Responsibly managed prescribed burning minimizes the potential for a negative impact on people in nearby communities.



For more information about the smoke management program, please visit us on the web: www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Burn.aspx or call 503-945-7451.



In 2019, the smoke intrusion definition changed to allow limited smoke to enter SSRAs, allowing greater opportunities to burn without seriously impacting air quality.