

## Wildfire Prevention – Advice for the General Public

Wildfires can have catastrophic impacts on upland habitats and rural communities, putting homes, property and lives at risk and diverting emergency services from their main tasks. In recent years, fires have also caused considerable damage to forests, private and State-owned. In addition to the losses faced by the forest owner, there is an economic impact for our forestry sector, which is an important indigenous industry and a significant rural employer.

Everybody has a part to play in protecting our unique rural landscapes, communities, habitats and forest resources from the threats posed by wildfire. If you are out and about enjoying our countryside and forests this summer, please help to reduce the risks of fire by keeping the following in mind:

- **Do not light fires in or near woodland.** You will be responsible if fire spreads from a campfire or barbeque. Use only designated barbeque points where available. Thoroughly soak BBQ embers after use and make sure that they are extinguished completely.
- **Do not block forest entrances or roads when parking** - access may be required by the fire service or forestry personnel in the event of an emergency, their job will be made easier if the roads are clear.
- **Be prepared** – Many hikers, cyclists, etc will carry mobile telephone, maps and GPS. These can be used to provide very accurate location information if you have to report a fire incident to the emergency services.
- **If you see a fire, report it immediately to the emergency services - Dial 999 or 112.** Give clear details as regards location and any other useful information such as the size of the fire, wind direction, proximity to dwellings or forestry etc. You will not be billed by the fire service or local authority for making the call.
- **Report any illegal and suspicious activity to the Gardai.** Dangerous or irresponsible burning activity should not be tolerated in our communities. Note that the burning of growing vegetation on uncultivated land between 1 March and 31 August each year is prohibited by law.
- **Do not approach fires** - Wildfires can be extremely dangerous and can rapidly change direction and behaviour. Avoid traversing uphill above fires – in suitable conditions, fire can travel uphill faster than you can run. Smoke can be highly disorienting and damaging to health. Avoid passing through smoke.
- **Do not attempt to extinguish fires yourself.** Fire fighting is dangerous work and should be left to suitably equipped and trained personnel. If you see a fire, call the fire service and retire to a safe distance.

**Be Prepared. Be Vigilant. Stamp Out Forest Fires.**

For further information regarding forest fires log on to  
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/forests-service/landandforestfires/>

