

Hot, Dry Conditions Prompt Ban on Open Burning

The recent high temperatures and persistent dry conditions have prompted officials to issue bans on open burning in the unincorporated areas of Sandoval County as well as the Jemez and Sandia Ranger Districts.

The bans, issued by the Sandoval County Fire Department, respectively, took effect on June 16, 2017, and will remain in effect until further notice.

"Effective immediately, the Sandoval County Fire Department will not be issuing burn permits of any kind in unincorporated Sandoval County," Fire Chief James Maxon said. "The burn ban is in response to dry conditions and numerous out of control brush fires that have occurred due to open burning."

The county fire department's ban prohibits all open flame sources such as campfires and agricultural burns. Burning in established fire rings and pits also is prohibited until further notice.

Meanwhile, the Jemez and Sandia Ranger Districts are operating under Stage I fire restrictions, which means fires, campfires, charcoal grills, and coal and wood stoves are allowed only in developed campsites or picnic areas with existing fire rings or grills. Campfires are prohibited at all dispersed camping sites. Stoves, lanterns or heaters fueled by propane or other liquefied petroleum fuels may be used in areas cleared of flammable materials within three feet of the device if they meet manufacturer's safety specifications and have on/off switches.

Smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles or buildings and developed recreation sites. Fireworks are always banned on National Forest System lands and any wild land/grassy area of Unincorporated Sandoval County.

Violation of the Forest Service's fire restrictions is punishable as a Class B misdemeanor by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations and/or by imprisonment for not more than six months.

Anyone found violating the county's an open burn ban will be subject to arrest and penalties up to and including a \$300 fine and 90 days in jail.