

# LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

## *Controlled Burns*

Controlled burns are an excellent way to manage and control brush, undergrowth and other unwanted vegetation; however, without proper care, they can turn into dangerous and costly fires for you and your neighbors. To optimize the benefits and minimize the risks of controlled burns, use common sense and take necessary precautions.

### **Before You Begin**

- Be aware of state and local burning plans.
- Develop a plan for implementing your controlled burn. Make sure your plan follows all federal, state and local regulations and that you have obtained all necessary permits.
- Notify your local fire responders that you are going to be conducting a controlled burn. Be prepared to give them your name, contact information, where the burn is located and how long you expect the burn to last.
- You should also notify neighboring landowners that you will be conducting a burn.

### **Weather Factors**

Weather is a huge factor to consider when planning a controlled burn. Weather can either work with you or against you.

#### ***Temperature***

- The optimum temperature for conducting a burn is 70 - 90°F.
- Fire conditions are the most unpredictable when temperatures are rising in the morning.

#### ***Relative Humidity***

- The optimum relative humidity at which to conduct a burn is 20% - 50%. Humidity can change quickly due to variations in temperature, sunlight and precipitation. Therefore, it's important to be aware that humidity is not guaranteed to remain steady throughout a burn.

#### ***Wind***

- Fire is not easy to predict, especially if there is some wind involved.
- The optimum wind speed is 8 - 15 mph.
- Constant winds from one direction before, during and after a burn provide the safest conditions for a controlled burn.
- Winds that vary indicate unstable atmospheric conditions.

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## *Precipitation*

- The drier the area is, the less smoke you can expect.
- Whether you want a cool burn or a hot burn will influence when you will burn in relation to precipitation.

## *Sunshine*

- The more sunlight that you have, the more flammable the area you are burning becomes.

The National Weather Service, Fire Damage Rating System, your own personal observations and local TV and radio meteorologists are the best way to obtain weather information.

## **During the Burn**

- Never use kerosene, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed burning.
- Ensure all people working with the fire wear clothing made out of natural materials or fire-retardant material. Caps, gloves and high top boots are also recommended.
- At least one competent person should physically monitor the controlled burn at all times.
- If the burn gets out of control, call 911 immediately.

## **After the Burn**

- Confirm that all areas of the fire are completely extinguished.
- Notify the local fire responders to let them know you have completed your controlled burn.



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