

Black Hills National Forest Enters Stage II Fire Restrictions



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Custer, SD, October 4, 2024 — Black Hills National Forest Supervisor Shawn Cochran has signed a Stage 2 Fire & Smoking Restrictions Special Order for the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota & Wyoming, effective Friday Oct. 4, 2024, through Dec. 25, 2024, unless rescinded.

The purpose of this Order is to protect public health, safety, and natural resources by preventing wildfires during a period of extreme fire danger. Stage 2 fire restrictions prohibit the ignition of any fire, campfire, charcoal barbecue, or grill, unless the device is solely fueled by liquid gas that can be turned on and off.

Western SD and eastern WY are in a period of drought forecasted to increase in intensity. Fuels are extremely dry and susceptible to wildfire outbreak. Implementing Stage 2 Fire restrictions allows the public to recreate in the Black Hills National Forest while still enacting preventative measures to reduce the risk of human caused wildfires.

“Persistent long-term drought conditions, combined with the lack of moisture, have dramatically increased the fire danger,” said Scott Jacobson, Black Hills National Forest Public Affairs Officer. “Conditions are ripe for large fire potential, so people need to be extremely careful in the Forest.”

Special Order 118 Prohibitions include:

1. Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal barbecue, or grill, unless the device is solely fueled by liquid gas that can be turned on and off (this includes in developed Forest Service campgrounds and picnic areas).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building.
3. Operating or using any internal or external combustion engine (e.g. chainsaw, generator, ATV) without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order.
4. Welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with an open flame.
5. Using an explosive. This includes but is not limited to fuses, blasting caps, fireworks, rockets, exploding targets, tracers, and incendiary ammunition.
6. Possessing or using a motor vehicle off National Forest Service roads, except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the motor vehicle.
7. Violating South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL) § 34-35-15 and/or Wyoming Statute 35-9-301 concerning burning, fires or which is for the purpose of preventing, or restricting the spread of fires.

Exemptions Include:

1. Persons with Forest Service Permit No. FS-7700-48 (Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order), specifically exempting them from this Order or a written determination by a Forest Service authorized officer that a permit is not required.
2. Any Federal, State, or Local Officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting resource in the performance of an official duty.

For a digital version of this Order and map, go to <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/blackhills/notices/?cid=STELPRDB5117120>.

For more information on the Black Hills National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills>, follow the Forest on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/blackhillsnf> or Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BlackHillsNF>.

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