



Fire Ban FAQs

George Washington & Jefferson National Forests

1) Why is the Forest Service implementing this fire ban?

Virginia is experiencing a severe drought, with rainfall levels significantly below normal. In addition, the fall months are the usual fire season in Virginia due to dry conditions with autumn leaves on the ground which serves as fuels for fires.

2) Does the fire ban apply to all areas on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, including developed areas, campgrounds, and dispersed areas?

No. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire or stovefire is prohibited in dispersed areas on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests. Fires are permitted within developed recreation areas such as campgrounds and day use areas and must be confined to fire rings, stoves, or grills.

Smoking is prohibited except within an enclosed vehicle or building, or developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.

3) Can I use my camp stove?

Camp stoves fueled by liquid or gas fuel are permitted throughout the Forests.

4) Can I use my gas grill?

Yes, gas grills may be used.

5) Can I smoke a cigarette in the woods?

Smoking is permitted only within enclosed vehicles or buildings, in developed recreation areas such as campgrounds and day use areas, or in areas cleared of all flammable material at least 3 feet in diameter.

6) Can I have a campfire in a campground?

Yes. Fires are permitted within developed recreation areas such as campgrounds and day use areas and must be confined to receptacles designed for fire such as fire rings, stoves, or grills.

7) Can I have a campfire in the woods?





No. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or any solid fuel stove fire including wood, charcoal, or coal-fired stoves and grills are prohibited in dispersed area on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

8) I am hiking the Appalachian Trail. Can I have a campfire?

Open fires may not be ignited or maintained at any dispersed area or shelter along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail within the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The use of portable lanterns, stoves, or heating equipment that utilize gas or liquid fuel is allowed.

9) I am going hunting. Can I have a campfire?

If you are camping in a developed campground where grills, fire places, or fire rings are present, you are permitted to build a fire in receptacles designed for fire. If you are not camping in a developed campground, fire is prohibited.

10) Is this a ban on all “open flames”?

No. Camp stoves, lanterns, and heating devices that use liquid or gas fuels may be used.

11) What is the punishment if I have a fire on the national forest?

Violations are punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months or both.

12) Does this fire ban affect private lands?

No. These specific restrictions are only for the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests. Several local counties have issued fire restrictions. Contact local authorities for more information specific to private lands.

13) How long will these restrictions be in effect

The restrictions are in effect until February 1, 2017. Only significant changes in conditions will warrant a re-evaluation of these restrictions.

14) How can I get more information?

Any District Office on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forest will have information on the current conditions. Information can also be obtained by visiting our website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj>

