



# NEWSLETTER

APR 2026  
ISSUE NO 3

## MISSOULA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT STAY UP TO DATE

### HAPPY SPRING!

It is officially Spring, which has been made apparent by the warm weather, rainy days, and abundance of burn piles. Current snowpack in the Missoula County area is average, or slightly below, with average moisture levels. A lot of the nation, specifically the Southwest, is experiencing record breaking highs so early in the season. Critical fire weather persists in the central Rockies and central Plains. That being said, it is never too early for us to start preparing for the wildfire season in Missoula County.

### BUILDING BURN PILES

With all of the recent windstorms Missoula County has gotten, homeowners are left with woody debris, branches, sometimes even fallen trees. Now that the burning season has begun, I'm sure you're ready to start clearing out your land. In order to construct a proper burn pile, be sure to follow these simple steps. First and foremost, be sure to only burn natural, untreated vegetation. It is most efficient to create numerous smaller piles to avoid having to drag debris and so that the burn time is shorter, since burning ends at 4 pm on the day you activate your permit, without an extension. Be sure your pile is not too densely packed in order to promote aeration for the drying out of the material and cover your pile with a tarp until you are ready to burn. Smaller burn piles should be 15-30 ft from green trees and larger piles should be 30-40 ft from green trees, be aware of overhanging branches as well, as these piles can create a significant amount of heat. To start your fire, only use a small amount of diesel, not gasoline since it has the tendency to explode. Crumpled newspaper with a small amount of diesel on it can be placed under fine fuel to be used as an ignition point. As the fire burns, there may be a ring of unburned materials around a central area of red-hot coals, use proper tools to move the outer material to the center until it is all burned and/or your fire is out cold. Remember that your burn pile must remain attended with proper tools and a water source at all times and if your burn becomes uncontrolled, call 911 immediately.

### FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

There has been an increase in interest from communities to become Firewise Communities in the past few years. Missoula County currently has 4 Firewise Communities and others in the process. This is a lengthy, but rewarding, process that these communities must go through and after receiving the "Firewise" title, they must remain in good standing to keep this label. In California, the "Safer from Fires" regulations require insurance companies to recognize Firewise communities by providing discounts to homeowners within the communities, hopefully we can begin to see these regulations nationwide. If you are interested in becoming a Firewise Community, check out the link attached.

### LINKS

[MISSOULA RURAL FIRE DISTRICT](#)

[BURN PERMITS](#)

[BECOMING A FIREWISE USA COMMUNITY](#)

[HOME IGNITION ZONE](#)

[BURNING SLASH PILES](#)

[BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULE](#)