



ASHFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Kyle E. Walker

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Prepared for the worst, providing the best.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Re: Immediate Outdoor Fire Ban

November 4th, 2024

Per order of the Ashfield Fire Chief, effective immediately there is a town wide ban on any outdoor burning/fires of any kind due to the elevated fire weather across the region. Taking in to account the high number of large wildfires in the Commonwealth, the warnings issued by multiple state and federal agencies, as well as the worsening drought conditions, it is imperative that we do our part to prevent outside fires. Any fire that starts outside during elevated fire weather, like we have now, has a greater than normal chance of spreading to nearby vegetation or combustibles.

There is an immediate ban on cooking fires, fire pits, agricultural burning and an existing restriction on brush burning, recreational fires and burn barrels. This includes fires associated with chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and cooking and heating equipment that are not specifically covered under 310 CMR 7.07, the Open Burning regulation.

The number and nature of these incidents across the state pose a grave risk to the communities around them as well as the fire personnel fighting them. Beyond the direct hazard posed by an out-of-control wildland fire, every firefighter or fire apparatus battling a *preventable* outdoor fire is a firefighter or apparatus that cannot respond to an unrelated structure fire, motor vehicle crash, medical call, or other emergency.

It is the fire department's duty to protect life, property, and the environment of the town of Ashfield. As the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) over the Fire Protection of the town, it is the Fire Chief's duty to enforce fire code and interpret when it is too dangerous to burn. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code grants the AHJ with "the authority to prohibit any or all open flames, use of fireworks, candles, and open recreational and cooking fires or other sources of ignition or established regulations on the use of any form of fire or smoking materials where circumstances may make such conditions hazardous." Under the Fire Code, "Hazardous conditions could include extreme drought, or red-flag-type conditions that can result in rapidly developing wildfires."

Lastly, if you see something, say something without delay. Dangerous conditions can expand rapidly. The community's assistance is needed to report fires or other hazards quickly.

Any questions, comments or concerns regarding this notice should be directed to the desk of the Ashfield Fire Chief.

Kyle E. Walker
Fire Chief