

# **DEC: Residential Brush Burning Prohibited in New York State Through May 14**

## **Burn Ban Decreased Spring Wildfires 37 Percent Since 2009**

### **Ban Reduces Wildfire Risks, Protects Lives and Property**

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today reminds residents that with spring approaching and conditions for wildfires heightened, residential brush burning is prohibited March 16 through May 14 across New York State.

"While many people associate wildfires with the western United States, the start of spring weather and the potential for dry conditions increases the risk for wildfires in New York," DEC Commissioner Seggos said. "New York prohibits residential burning during the high-risk fire season to reduce wildfires and protect people, property, and natural resources. The ban has been extremely effective in reducing the number of wildfires, and we're encouraging New Yorkers to put safety first."

Even though much of the state is currently blanketed in snow, warming temperatures can quickly cause wildfire conditions to arise.

DEC will post a Fire Danger Map rating forecast daily for the 2018 fire season on its website and on the NY Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife App available on DEC's website. Currently, fire conditions in most of the state are low risk.

Open burning of debris is the largest single cause of spring wildfires in New York State. When temperatures are warmer and the past fall's debris and leaves dry out, wildfires can start and spread easily and be further fueled by winds and a lack of green vegetation.

New York first enacted strict restrictions on open burning in 2009 to help prevent wildfires and reduce air pollution. The regulations allow residential brush fires in towns with fewer than 20,000 residents during most of the year, but prohibit such burning in spring when most wildfires occur.

In the eight-year period since the ban was established, the average number of spring fires per year decreased by 36.7 percent, from 2,649 in 2009, to 1,677 in 2016.

Campfires using charcoal or untreated wood are allowed, but people should never leave such fires unattended and must extinguish them. Burning garbage or leaves is prohibited year-round.

Some towns, primarily in and around the Adirondack and Catskill parks, are designated "fire towns." Open burning is prohibited year-round in these municipalities unless an individual or group has a written permit from DEC. To find out whether a municipality is designated a "fire town" or to obtain a permit, contact the appropriate DEC regional office. A list of [regional offices](#) is available on DEC's website.

Violators of the state's open burning regulation are subject to both criminal and civil enforcement actions, with a minimum fine of \$500 for a first offense. To report environmental law violations call 1-800-TIPP DEC (1-800-847-7332), or report [online](#) on DEC's website.