



The Forestland Burning Guide

What the landowner needs to know

August 2010

Protection from Fire Program

Scope and Purpose

The policy of the State of Oregon is to improve the management of prescribed burning as a forest management and protection practice, and to minimize emissions consistent with the air quality objectives of the federal Clean Air Act and the State of Oregon Clean Air Act Implementation Plan.

The implementation plan has a twofold aim: (1) prevent smoke from prescribed burns on forestlands from accumulating in smoke-sensitive receptor areas, or SSRAs (designated cities or populated areas), as well as other areas determined to be sensitive to smoke, and (2) provide maximum opportunity for essential forestland burning while minimizing emissions.

Burn procedure summary

To set up a prescribed burn, a landowner or burn boss should draw up a plan that takes into account:

- How weather will be monitored
- How the burn will be conducted to prevent smoke from entering an SSRA or other area sensitive to smoke
- Resources required to ignite the burn and to prevent it from becoming a wildfire

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) or Association forester may require a written plan to address the above concerns before issuing a burn permit.

The forester will also collect information about the site to be burned and register it in the Oregon Smoke Management Data System. More information will be collected and entered into the data system when the burn unit is planned for ignition, and after the burn is completed.

Burn registration

Unless the forester waives the requirement, all prescribed burning on forestland within a protection district must be registered seven days prior to the ignition.

Information to be provided for registration includes: name of landowner, location and size of the unit, type of burn, fuel loading, and reason for the burn. A registration

fee of \$0.50 per acre is required on all federal forestland, and on private forestland west of the Cascade crest. No fee is required for private burning east of the Cascades. For small burns, a minimum fee of \$30 is required.

Planning a burn

Once the burn registration and written plan are complete, the burn unit may now be planned. The landowner or burn boss must call the local forestry office at least a day ahead of the desired burn day. This allows the office to coordinate and prioritize burning with other landowners.

The burn boss must provide specific information about the unit to the district about location, method of burning, fuel-loading tonnages, and ignition time.

Usually, final approval of the burn will not be made until after 2:30 p.m. the day before the desired burn date, when the smoke management forecast and instructions have been issued.

Once final approval is given, a permit is issued. The permit specifies:

- Burn site information
- Conditions for burning
- Allowed burning dates and hours

The more communication and early planning between the landowner and the local forester, the greater the chance for a successful burn opportunity.

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Conducting a burn

Just prior to burning a unit, the burn boss must verify that actual on-site conditions are consistent with the forecasted weather.

The burn boss must also monitor the burn after it has begun. If it appears that smoke from the burn will affect an SSRA or other area sensitive to smoke, or is already affecting an SSRA, the burn boss must terminate the burn in a manner that does not compromise worker safety or the ability to prevent escape of the burn.

Upon termination of a prescribed burn, residual fire should be extinguished as soon as possible. No additional burning should be attempted until approval is received from the forester.

Once the unit has been burned, details about the amount of fuel burned, ignition and weather information must be provided by the next business day to the forester for entry into the smoke management data system.

A burn fee will be assessed to the landowner after the burn according to burn type and acres registered. The fee assessment will usually occur after the first time the unit



When weather and wind conditions are optimum, the smoke from a forest burn will be carried away from communities. This lessens the likelihood of complaints.

is ignited. The fees are \$0.50 per acre for landing and right-of-way burning, and \$3.10 per acre for all other burning. If landings are burned first, and other types of burning are accomplished in the unit later, the landings are charged at \$0.50 per acre, and the other registered burning is charged at \$2.60 per acre.

There is no charge for subsequent burning unless the unit is burned more than two calendar years after the year registered.

Conclusion

The success of the smoke management program depends on the actions of the landowner and representatives of the State Forester. Responsibly managed prescribed burning minimizes the potential for a negative impact on the population of nearby communities.

For additional information about the smoke management program, visit us on the web:
www.oregon.gov/ODF/FIRE/fire.shtml/#Smoke_Management
or call 503-945-7451.



In 2007, the rules on prescribed forest burning tightened. These changes were necessary to retain this important management tool for landowners and operators.