



News Release

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GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION LAUNCHES PRE-IRMA SAFETY PLANS

The Georgia Forestry Commission is taking steps to protect the safety of citizens in advance of incoming weather associated with Hurricane Irma.

Effective Saturday, September 9, permits for all types of open burning will be suspended. With erratic wind behavior and higher wind speeds expected, the GFC is putting the restriction in place in an effort to prevent wildfires. Campfires and outdoor cooking fires are exempt from these requirements, however the danger of escaped flames is still present and extreme caution is warranted.

"We're monitoring conditions closely," said Georgia Forestry Commission Director Chuck Williams. "Forest and wildland vegetation in many parts of the state are dry, and escaped open burning is the number one cause of wildfire. Burn permits will again be issued as conditions allow," he said.

The Georgia Forestry Commission, along with local and state emergency, fire and first responder personnel, are making preparations to respond to expected effects of Hurricane Irma. While GFC and local fire suppression forces are sufficient to handle wildfire events, assistance from citizens delaying burning plans can help reduce the threat of escaped fire.

As part of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) support team, the GFC stands ready to assist with the consequences of violent weather. The GFC provides chainsaw crews for road clearing and emergency access, supply and delivery operations, and vehicles and personnel for emergency supply distribution. In addition, GFC furnishes aviation resources to support post storm emergency communications, search and rescue duties, and damage assessments to support GEMA operations.

"We appreciate the cooperation and patience of all Georgians," said Williams. "Our agency is prepared to respond to these extreme conditions, and together we can safely manage this challenge."

For more information about services of the GFC, visit GaTrees.org.

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