



The Forestland Burning Guide

What the landowner needs to know

Draft 2

May 15, 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 procedures

Before starting 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 escaping into a wildfire

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

In addition, ODF will 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 has been completed.

Burn registration

Unless the district 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 land, and on private land west of the Cascade crest. For small burns, depending on burn type and acreage, a minimum fee of \$30 is required.

Planning a burn

As noted, the forester may require a written plan prior to burning. This plan is filled out by the landowner or burn boss. The plan includes information about the unit to be burned that is required for registration, along with information about how the fire will be controlled and any special issues or instructions regarding burning the unit.

Once the plan is submitted, the forester reviews it. If the plan is approved, then a permit is issued. The permit specifies:

- type and location of the burn
- conditions for burning
- allowed burning dates and hours.

The burn boss must check the current smoke management forecast and instructions on the day prior to the burn, and then conduct the burn in compliance with them. The burn boss must also make arrangements to be informed if the forecast or instructions are subsequently changed. The burn boss must also provide specific information to the district about unit location, method of burning, fuel loading tonnages, and ignition time.

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Conducting a burn

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

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 district forester.

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

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



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.

unit 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, then 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 time the unit was first ignited.

Conclusion

The success of the smoke management program depends on the actions of the landowner and Department of Forestry employees. 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.

