

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division • Air Protection Branch

4244 International Parkway • Suite 120 • Atlanta • Georgia 30354

404/363-7000 • Fax: 404/363-7100

Judson H. Turner, Director

For Immediate Release

Contact: Vicky Giles – 404-362-2536

Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Open Burning Ban Begins May 1, 2016 for 54 Counties

(ATLANTA - April 26, 2016) – Beginning May 1, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) open burning ban will be in effect for 54 Georgia counties. The open burning ban has been in place during the summer ozone season since 2005.

The open burning ban prohibits citizens and businesses from burning yard and land-clearing debris from May 1 through September 30. This restriction is in addition to a ban on the burning of household garbage, which is enforced year-round throughout Georgia.

Citizens are reminded that these rules are in place to protect public health. A person's health may be negatively impacted by the chemicals and pollutants found in the smoke released from fires.

Ground-level ozone is most commonly produced in the heat of the summer. Ground-level ozone can cause lung inflammation as well as other health problems. Open burning also creates particle pollution, which consists of extremely small particles that can increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

May through September is a time of year when people, particularly children, are more likely to be outdoors. The outdoor activity also coincides with the increase in ground-level ozone and particle pollution.

This is especially true of ground-level ozone since hot, sunny days can intensify the creation of ozone. "We can't control the weather, said Karen Hays, chief of the Georgia EPD Air Protection Branch. "But limiting open-burning during these hot summer months when ground-level ozone is so readily formed is one of the easiest ways to help Georgia's air quality continue to improve."

Some actions such as campfires and agricultural activities are exempt.

Citizens can access more information on the open burning ban by visiting <http://epd.georgia.gov/> and clicking on "Open Burning Ban" under Quick Links, or by calling the EPD District Office in their area (phone numbers listed below). Small businesses can obtain help and information by calling EPD's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program toll-free at 1-877-427-6255.

Counties included in the ban and the appropriate EPD District Office phone numbers follow:

[MORE]

Mountain District Office (Atlanta): 404-362-2671 Carroll, Clayton, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Heard, Henry, Rockdale, and Spalding counties.

Northeast District Office (Athens): 706-369-6376 Banks, Barrow, Butts, Clarke, Hall, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Putnam, and Walton counties.

East Central District Office (Augusta): 706-667-4343 Columbia and Richmond counties.

West Central District Office (Macon): 478-751-6612 Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Lamar, Monroe, Peach, Pike, Twiggs, Upson, Meriwether, and Troup counties.

Mountain District Office (Cartersville): 770-387-4900 Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Dawson, Floyd, Forsyth, Gordon, Haralson, Lumpkin, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, and Walker counties.

For more information about alternatives to burning, such as composting and chipping, please visit <http://epd.georgia.gov/air/outreach-and-alternatives-burning>. You may also access a map of Georgia composting operations at <http://epd.georgia.gov/composting-operations-georgia>.

Debris can also be hauled to a commercial processing/grinding/composting operation or to an inert or construction and demolition landfill. For a list of landfills in your area, please call EPD's Solid Waste Management Program at 404-362-2692 and/or visit the Land Protection Branch website for more details: <http://epd.georgia.gov/land-protection-branch>.

#