



## UNION COUNTY Emergency Services

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# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

### **Union County Eases Restrictions on County Wide Burn Ban**

Union County Board of Commissioners voted in a regular county commission session today to ease the County Wide Burn Ban/Regulated Use restrictions effective immediately at the recommendation of the Union County Fire Defense Board. Fire Defense Board Chief Larry Wooldridge stated that with the cooler temperatures and the return of resources to the area, the county's exposure to extreme fire behavior has decreased enough to return to the annual regulated use closure for the remainder of the month. Chief Wooldridge indicated that the Fire Defense Board will continue to monitor conditions.

As specified in County Ordinance 2016-01, the county will remain in regulated fire season through September 30 with a ban on open burning. The open burning ban states that during regulated fire season, no open burning will be allowed with the exception of regulated agricultural field burning. Incinerators and burn barrels are allowed between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., but must comply with requirements in the ordinance. Improved fire pits and fire appliances are allowed. Recreational guidelines must be followed including rock-lined fire pits surrounded by dirt, rock or commercial rings. All combustible materials are to be a minimum of three feet beyond the fire ring, and fires shall be attended at all times. The county ordinance may be read in its entirety on the county website at [www.union-county.org](http://www.union-county.org).

In addition to Union County easing fire restrictions, forest officials on the Umatilla National Forest have lifted all public use restrictions pertaining to recreational chainsaw use, smoking, and off-road travel. Seasonal campfire restrictions will remain in place until October 31, 2017, however these campfire restrictions do not apply to designated wilderness areas and specified exempted developed recreation sites. The Wallowa Whitman Forest officials have reduced their restrictions to Phase A which includes seasonal campfire restrictions, but will also limit chainsaw use from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., smoking is only allowed in enclosed vehicles, buildings or cleared areas, and no off-road or off-trail travel. Please check with your local Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) office for public use restrictions on lands protected by ODF.

The public's awareness of fire danger and cooperation is essential to minimizing wildfire in Union County. Recreationists, firewood cutters, hunters, and other forest users can all help by closely adhering to restrictions, operating safely and cautiously and keeping up-to-date on the latest orders and regulations. Additional information regarding forest restrictions can be found by visiting the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch webpage at [www.bmidc.org](http://www.bmidc.org).

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