

**The Missouri Prescribed Fire Council (MPFC) recognizes the challenges of utilizing prescribed fire on private lands not the least of which is identifying an individual or company that provides these services and also alleviates liability concerns to the landowner. The MPFC does not have the authority to certify available contractors and does not endorse any individuals or companies. However, when researching potential contractors the MPFC recommends asking the following questions to help ensure that the one chosen is qualified to do a safe and effective burn:**

**#1. Insurance** – a legitimate contractor will have liability insurance with an endorsement for prescribed fire. In some cases, a contractor may rely on your home owners or farm policy but it must be made clear prior to conducting the burn if insurance is in force and whose policy is covering the burn. There may be specific criteria that need to be met for home owners or farm insurance to cover a claim. Check with your insurance company prior to conducting a burn.

**#2. Experience** – inquire about the contractor’s experience. How many years have they been burning? How many acres have they burned? How many burns do they conduct annually? Do they have experience with your fuel type (grassland, woodland, glade) and terrain (level, rolling, steep hills)?

**#3. Training** – has the contractor and crew received formal training specific to prescribed burning? Does the contractor and crew participate in continued education/training?

**#4. Equipment** – a contractor at a minimum should have at least some type of water unit and appropriate hand tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) to safely conduct a prescribed fire. Do they have enough for the size of your burn?

Small, well planned and prepared burns can be conducted with ATV or backpack sprayers, swatters and rakes. Larger burns may require UTV, tractor or truck water units of 50 to 300-gallon capacity, ATV’s or UTV’s, backpack blowers, swatters, rakes, radio communications and in some cases 300+ gallon nurse tanks for supplemental water.

Don’t assume someone calling themselves a prescribed fire contractor is qualified to conduct a prescribed fire. Ask about their insurance, experience, training and equipment and make your own determination. Ultimately it is YOUR responsibility.