

# Red Flag Warnings vs. Fire Restrictions

## What You Should Know

Property Owners and Visitors to Forest Lakes cannot have fires when the National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning or when the Forest Service issues fire restrictions. Typically, this is when hot, dry, and/or windy conditions are present in the forests—these conditions increase the risk of wildfires.

Red Flag Warning and fire restrictions are not the same thing. Here are some of the major differences between them:

### Red Flag Warning

**Issued by the National Weather Service –**  
Issued according to geographic areas.

**No Stages –**  
When the Red Flag Warning is issued, the prohibited activities are the same every time – ***no open flame fires (campfires AND charcoal fires)***.

**Duration is shorter –**  
Determined on a day-to-day basis if the Red Flag Warning needs to be issued and a specific time frame it will be in effect.

**Public AND Private Lands –**  
The Red Flag Warning applies to all lands within the geographic area.

### Fire Restrictions

**Issued by the Forest Service –**  
Issued by each National Forest.

**Varying Stages –**  
There are three (3) stages that can be issued depending on the risk of wildfires. In general, the Forest Service issues more limiting fire restrictions when there is a higher risk of wildfires.

**Duration is longer –**  
Typically last over an extended period of time such as several weeks.

**Public Land Only -**  
Applies only to those lands within its jurisdiction.

Sometimes there are no fire restrictions on the national forests, but there is a Red Flag Warning in effect. In this scenario, folks would not be able to have a campfire or charcoal fire. The only scenario visitors can have fires without any prohibitions is when there is no Red Flag Warning and no fire restrictions.

## What you can and cannot do during different fire scenarios

<b>Conditions.....</b>	<b>Restrictions.....</b>
<b>No Red Flag Warning AND No Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>You <u>CAN</u> have a campfire, charcoal fire, and/or use a pressurized gas stove.</p> <p>You CAN smoke outside of buildings and vehicles as long as you are in an area 3 feet in diameter cleared of burnable material.</p> <p><i>Always exercise caution in having a fire: choose a location cleared of burnable material; wait to start a fire until strong winds have subsided; never leave a fire unattended; and make sure it is "dead out" before leaving your campsite.</i></p>
<b>Red Flag Warning</b>	<p>You <u>CANNOT</u> have campfires or charcoal fires.</p> <p>You CANNOT smoke except within buildings, vehicles, developed recreation sites, or an area 3 feet in diameter cleared of burnable material.</p> <p>You <u>CAN</u> use a pressurized gas stove.</p>
<b>Stage I Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>You <u>CANNOT</u> have campfires or charcoal fires except in designated campsites which have a metal fire ring and/or camp hosts.</p> <p>You <u>CAN</u> use a pressurized gas stove.</p> <p>You <u>CAN</u> smoke only within buildings, vehicles, developed recreation sites, or an area 3 feet in diameter cleared of burnable material.</p>
<b>Stage II Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>Same as Stage I Fire Restrictions. Additionally, Stage II Fire Restrictions prohibit other activities which may include (but are not limited to) the following:</p> <p>You <u>CANNOT</u> operate any motorized vehicle or internal combustion engine (such as a chainsaw) without a Forest Service approved spark arrestor, weld, or use an explosive.</p> <p><i>Always check with the local Forest Service office for specific prohibited activities during Stage II Fire Restrictions.</i></p>
<b>Stage III Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>You <u>CANNOT</u> enter, stay, or use any portion of the national forest that is closed.</p>
<b>Red Flag Warning AND No Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>Same as Red Flag Warning.</p>
<b>Red Flag Warning AND Fire Restrictions</b>	<p>Same as Red Flag Warning. Additionally, forest visitors must also follow prohibitions as outlined in the specific fire restrictions stage.</p>

To find out if a Red Flag Warning is in effect, visit the National Weather Service website at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/fgz/>