

# FIRE SAFETY IS IMPORTANT THIS HUNTING SEASON



Dead brush and the windy weather common to Texas falls and winters can increase the wildfire risk for hunters and outdoorsmen in a normal year. But the ongoing, record drought this year has vegetation so dry that even the smallest spark can ignite a devastating fire.

With this in mind, it is important hunters be especially careful when heading out to the countryside. Dangerous wildfire conditions are expected through the fall and winter, and it won't take much to ignite a blaze. Unattended campfires, discarded cigarettes, a hot car or truck exhaust system and even a gun muzzle can start a fire that could quickly grow out of control.

“Roughly 90 percent of fires in Texas are started accidentally by people,” said Justice Jones, coordinator for the Texas Forest Service’s Wildland Urban Interface and Fire Prevention programs. “That means they’re preventable. And that’s just what we want people to do – prevent them.”

With that in mind, here are a few suggestions to help not only hunters, but campers and others who plan to head outdoors to avoid sparking a wildfire:

- Be aware of county bans on outdoor burning and obey them. Even in areas not under a burn ban, one should be especially careful because the fire risk is especially high this year. People should not build fires during dry or windy conditions.
- Be careful where you drive or park, and stay on designated trails. Parking or idling a vehicle in dry brush or grass can be dangerous because a hot muffler can set fire to the plant material.
- When shooting close to the ground, be sure there is no dry grass or tinder in front of your muzzle. Though rare, it’s not impossible for a shot to ignite a fire.
- Be extremely careful when discarding cigarette butts or used matches.
- Use spark arresters on all power equipment.
- Be sure to completely extinguish campfires when ready to go. Never leave a campfire unattended, even for a few minutes.
- Keep a bucket, a shovel and a fire extinguisher in your vehicle and at your camp.



For more information about wildfires and their prevention, please visit the Texas Forest Service Web site, by clicking [here](#).