

Firefighter Safety Briefing for March 5&6, 2018



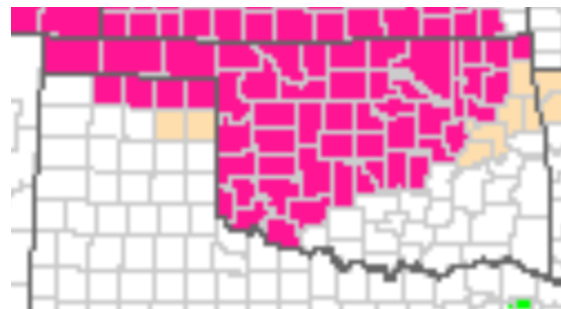
The Fire Weather Forecast for today and tomorrow will pose challenging conditions across much of Oklahoma. Very dry fuels across western Oklahoma and accelerated drying in both central and eastern regions will result in increased probability of fire occurrence and potential for large/significant fires to develop. Very dry atmospheric conditions and strong/gusty northwest winds in the post-frontal fire environment will likely lead to problematic fire behavior and extreme rates of fire spread should fires escape initial attack. Increased soil moisture in both central and eastern Oklahoma poses a risk for fire engines and equipment becoming stuck and precautions should be taken to mitigate that potential.

A Red Flag Warning/Fire Weather Watch is presently in place for a large area in Oklahoma both today and tomorrow. Please refer to <http://www.weather.gov/> for the latest updates to the fire weather forecast.

Watch/Warning Area:

Significant fire danger indices will exist across much of Oklahoma Monday and Tuesday with dry conditions continuing through the week.

Very-high to extreme fire danger indices are expected with warm temperatures, very low relative humidity values, marginal overnight recovery and strong/gusty northwest winds. Fires are expected to exhibit problematic fire behavior and potential for extreme rates of fire spread on any fire that becomes established

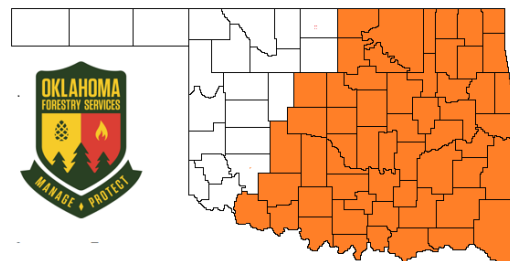


- Short Grass / Pasture: Maximum of 180-325 ft./min. (3+ mph) , head fire flame length 8-12 ft.
- Tall Grass / Prairie: 300-450 ft./min. (5.1 mph), head fire flame length 12-25 ft.
- Grass/Shrub/Redcedar: 100-200 ft./min, head fire flame length 10-18 ft. (Single/Group Tree Torching expected)
- Timber Litter(Forest): 20-45 ft./min., head fire flame length 3-8 ft.
 - Probability of Ignition will be near 70% during peak burning conditions meaning the potential for spotting will be high. The fuel moisture induced rate of combustion combined with the forecast winds may produce short-range spotting.

Fire Weather and resulting Fire Behavior predictions for Monday and Tuesday indicate the frontal assault should be avoided – do not engage in frontal assault tactics. Anchor the fire at advantageous point (road, creek, cold black) and flank the fire if utilizing direct firefighting tactics. Work the fire from the black if possible to provide for quick escape to a safety zone. Avoid placing yourselves in a situation where unburned fuel is between you and the fire. If protecting structures insure that ingress and egress are identified, escape routes and safety zones are identified and equipment is pointed in a direction to facilitate rapid escape. Establish trigger points for evaluating tactics and develop contingency plans should the primary plan not be successful.

Soil Moisture Hazard: Central and eastern counties have received precipitation recently increasing soil moisture; however dormant fuels will respond rapidly to ongoing and forecast drying conditions along with higher probability of initial attack. The increase in soil moisture will elevate the risk of vehicles and equipment becoming stuck in soft soil placing personnel and equipment at risk and reducing the availability of those resources to effectively engage in firefighting operations and more importantly exposing them to the risk of burnover.

- Attack fires from the black to reduce the likelihood of a burnover if stuck in unburned fuels.
- Scout areas on foot ahead of engines to assess soil conditions reducing the probability of equipment becoming hung-up.
- Consider contingency plans and indirect firefighting tactics prior to direct tactics becoming unsuccessful.



All firefighters are advised to take particular note of the 10 Standard Fire Orders with specific interest in the first three: (a complete list of the Standard Firefighting Orders below)

1. **Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.**
2. **Know what your fire is doing at all times.**
3. **Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.**

Resources:

- Oklahoma Forestry Services will have Task Forces prepositioned in northwestern Oklahoma to respond with engines, dozers and overhead personnel.
- OFS will coordinate with OHP to have wildfire operational specialists in the air to assist with fire size-up and operational advice.
- National Guard helicopters are available
- County Wildland Task Force Resources should be prepared for mobilization.

To request assistance, call the Resource Hotline (800) 800-2481

Be Alert, Keep Calm, Think Clearly, Act Decisively

Standard Firefighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.

Four common denominators of fire behavior on tragedy fires:

1. On relatively small fires or deceptively quiet areas of large fires.
2. In relatively light fuels, such as grass, herbs, and light brush.
3. When there is an unexpected shift in wind direction or wind speed.
4. When fire responds to topographic conditions and runs uphill. Alignment of topography and wind during the burning period should always be considered a trigger point to re-evaluate strategy and tactics.