

FOREST FIRE DANGER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The fire season in New Hampshire is usually from mid March through mid November. During the fire season New Hampshire weather data is collected daily from the National Weather Service in Taunton, Massachusetts and Gray, Maine, and from the system of fire tower lookout stations and local fire departments with weather gathering instruments. This weather data allows us to determine daily forest fire danger to assist fire departments throughout the state with what might be expected for wildfire behavior.

Weather reporting stations and the National Weather Service provide temperature, relative humidity, wind direction, wind speed, and rainfall in the last 24 hours. This information is put into the National Fire Danger Rating System formula that provides us with the fire danger class day (see chart below).

Prior day weather data from the National Weather Service stations is analyzed every morning and a **predicted fire danger class day** is determined and broadcast state wide at 10 am every day. By 2 pm the current day's weather data has been analyzed and the **actual fire danger class day** is broadcast statewide. This information is also faxed to local fire departments and dispatch centers throughout the state. If you would like to have your fax number added to the list please call the Forest Protection Bureau at 271-2217. The information is also posted daily to the division website at www.nhdf.org.

Statewide broadcasts of the 10 am predicted and 2 pm actual fire danger class day reports are done through the statewide New Hampshire Forestry radio system. Broadcasts are made at the above times 7-days a week during the fire season that are received by forestry two-way communication radio equipment and scanner radios. Division of Forests and Lands staff, local fire departments, forest fire wardens, deputy wardens, and the public (via scanner radios) are equipped to receive the broadcasts.

If you would like to be kept informed at 10 am and 2 pm every day, program your scanner radio to 151.295 MHz for northern New Hampshire, and 151.445 MHz for southern New Hampshire. Also, many communities and local fire departments maintain a Smokey Bear sign with the daily fire danger class day calculated and broadcast by the Division of Forests and Lands Forest Protection Bureau.

The following conditions must be met to issue a Fire Weather Watch or a Red Flag Warning:

A. Ten hour fuels must be at 8% moisture or less and expected to remain at that level for 2 or more days. (Usually the state will notify the NWS when we reach those conditions).

B. The afternoon and evening relative humidity levels are expected to fall to 25% or lower and the 20 foot sustained winds are expected to exceed 15 mph (13 knots) for at least 2 hours.

"Fire Weather Watch" is used to alert the user to the possible development of a Red Flag event in the near future. This could be up to 72 hours in advance.

"Red Flag Warning" will be issued to warn the user of an impending or on-going Red Flag event. A Red Flag Warning will be issued immediately when Red Flag Conditions are occurring. Otherwise, it will be issued for impending Red Flag Conditions when there is a high degree of confidence that conditions will develop and the forecast time of onset for the event is less than 24 hours from the forecast issuance time.

