



## ***Fire and Drought in Virginia ... What Should You Do?***

Summer in Virginia was unusually hot and dry, and most of the state is suffering from moderate to severe drought. Many areas now have water restrictions. As these conditions continue, we face increased risk of significant wildfires during the fall fire season.

What can you do to help?

### **Reduce the Risk of Fire**

- **Most important:** *observe area outdoor burn bans.*
- Remove vines from house walls, and remove trees limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
- Prune branches and shrubs within 15 feet of chimneys and stove pipes.
- Keep the gas grill and propane tank at least 15 feet from any structure. Try not to use gas grills during high risk times.
- Clear leaves and trash from underneath decks and porches.
- Cover attic, soffit and louver house vents with ¼" or smaller corrosion-resistant wire mesh to help keep embers and flaming debris from entering.
- Stack firewood 100 feet away and uphill from any structure.
- Use fire-resistant materials when building or renovating. Use non-combustible materials for roofs, which are especially vulnerable in a wildfire.
- Keep matches and lighters up high and in a locked cabinet if possible.
- Ask your local fire department to inspect your residence for fire safety and prevention.
- Ask the power company to clear branches from power lines.

### **Easy Ways to Conserve Water in Your Home**

- **Most important:** *follow any water restrictions that are issued by your local government.*
- Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it, such as watering indoor plants or your garden.
- Turn faucets off completely to avoid drips and slow leaks.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.
- Take short showers, not baths. Limit showers to five minutes or less.
- Turn the valves under sinks to reduce the rate of water flow.
- As you wait for shower water to heat up, collect the water in a bucket for watering plants.
- Cook food in as little water as possible.
- Use washing machines and dishwashers only when fully loaded.
- Use a pan to wash vegetables and dishes instead of letting water run continuously.

- Don't let water run while brushing teeth, washing hands or shaving. If you turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth, you can save as much as 14 gallons of water a day.

For more on wildfires and droughts, go to [www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov) and click on Stay Informed.

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