

**focus on fire**  
**Grand Rapids & Saratoga**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
 Division of Forestry  
 473 Griffith Ave.  
 Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494



**Fireworks Laws & Safety**

Fireworks are a significant cause of forest fires each year in Wisconsin. Restricted fireworks (bottle rockets, firecrackers, jumping jacks and roman candles) are much more likely to cause a forest fire or injury because of their erratic and unpredictable behavior. Since many of the restricted fireworks are of the airborne variety, often the wildfire ignition can be well away from the site that the fireworks are being used. It is unlawful to possess or use restricted fireworks without a permit from the town chairperson which is only supplied to those having the proper permit.

**Fireworks Safety Tips**

- Use legal fireworks outdoors only in a clear area away from buildings, vehicles and shrubbery.
- Have water handy.
- When children are present, always provide close adult supervision and never give fireworks to small children.
- Follow instructions and use good judgement.
- Don't experiment with homemade fireworks and never attempt to re-light dud fireworks.

Contact Information		
	Town of Grand Rapids	Town of Saratoga
<b>Fire Department</b>	Emergency: 911 Non-emergency: Grand Rapids: (715) 424-1815	Emergency: 911 Non-emergency: Grand Rapids: (715) 424-1815 Rome: (715) 325-8015 Nekoosa: (715) 886-7893
<b>Town Contact</b>	Ph: (715) 424-1821 Web: townofgrandrapids.org	Ph: (715) 325-5204 Web: saratogawisconsin.org
<b>Where can I get a burning permit?</b>	Grand Rapids Municipal Building (715) 424-1821 Kathy & Jerry Murphy (Grand Rapids) (715) 423-8211 The Store in Kellner (715) 424-4010 Timberline Archery Bait & Tackle (715) 325-7662 DNR Service Center on Griffith Avenue (open Tuesday only 9-12:30, 1:30-4:00) Or call 888-WIS-BURN (947-2876)	
<b>Driveway Ordinance</b>	www.dnr.state.wi.us/forestry/fire also Grand Rapids Ordinance #2	www.dnr.state.wi.us/forestry/fire
<b>Burning Ordinance</b>	Wisconsin Rapids Compost Pile is available with annual permit which costs \$35 – call (715) 421-8264 for more information. Free brush drop-off available at McDonald Trucking & Wood Recycling at 2820 Plover Road - call (715) 421-1683 for more information.	

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# focus on fire

Spring 2011

## Towns of Grand Rapids & Saratoga

### Towns of Grand Rapids & Saratoga Plan for Wildfire



Community members discuss outreach projects.

The towns of Grand Rapids and Saratoga are considered to be at very high risk to wildfire due to the sandy soils and highly flammable jack pine/oak cover type as

well as pine plantation. It is of great concern when homes are built in areas of highly flammable vegetation because wildfire can quickly move from surrounding natural areas to homes when homeowners do not properly prepare their properties before a fire occurs.

In an effort to better prepare for wildfire, a planning committee consisting of town officials, local fire departments, emergency government and other stakeholders completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Towns of Grand Rapids and Saratoga which was adopted in July of 2010. The Plan provides a list of projects, which includes this newsletter, designed to better prepare the community for wildfire. You can find out more by contacting a member of your Town Board or by viewing the plan online at [www.ncwrpc.org](http://www.ncwrpc.org).

**Did you know...Debris burning is the #1 cause of wildfires in Wisconsin?**



### Know Your Burning Regulations

#### Burning Permit Rules for DNR Intensive Fire Protection Area



**Burning Permits are required for outdoor burning** any time during the year that the ground is not completely snow covered. Burning permits are not required for fires that are used solely for the purposes of warming or cooking.



**Burning permits are FREE!** You may be fined \$175.00 or more for burning without a burning permit or for burning contrary to permit restrictions.



**Your fire must be attended at all times** and must be totally extinguished before you leave.



**If your fire escapes control, you can be held liable** for fire suppression costs plus any damage caused by the fire.



**You must also comply with local ordinances** which may be more restrictive than state law. Contact your local fire department, town chairperson or local municipal official if you have questions.



#### Simple Steps to Burning Safely

- 1 Obtain an annual burning permit from a local Ranger Station or Emergency Fire Warden.
- 2 Check daily for burn restrictions after 11:00 a.m. on the internet at [dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fire](http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fire) or over the phone at 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876).
- 3 Be certain to read your permit and follow the daily burn restrictions. Have water and rake/shovel available at the site before you burn.

# Campfire Safety

Under normal circumstances a burning permit is not required for warming or cooking fires (campfires) in Wisconsin. However, you are responsible for maintaining a safe campfire and can be held liable for the suppression cost should you cause a wildfire. Keep your campfire small and avoid campfires on windy days.

- 1** Select an open level spot away from trees, overhanging branches and dense dry grass.
- 2** Clear a three-foot fire circle to bare soil around where your campfire is going to be.
- 3** Use an existing fire ring if one is available or dig a shallow hole in the center of your fire circle. Put rocks around it to shelter the campfire from the wind and help keep burning materials from blowing outside of the ring.
- 4** Never leave your campfire unattended and always have a shovel and bucket of water on site.
- 5** Before you leave or go to sleep, drown your campfire thoroughly with water and stir the ashes. Repeat until the ashes are cold.



**You are responsible**



**for maintaining a safe campfire.**

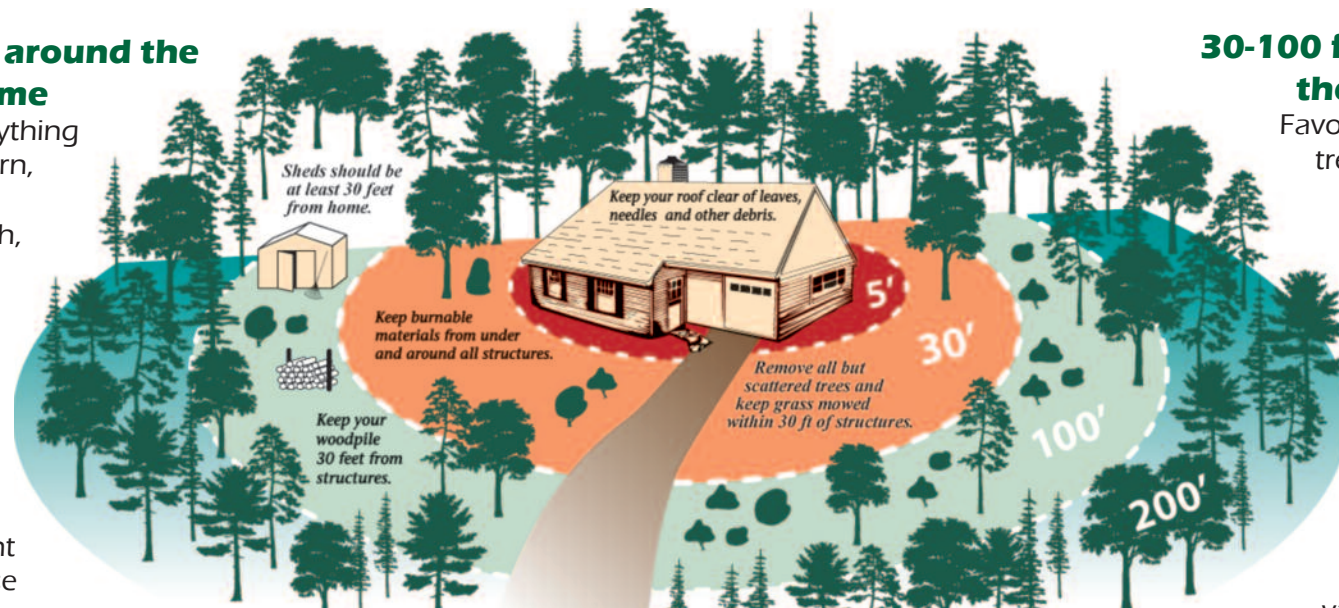


Good driveway access

## What should I do around my home?

### 3-5 feet around the home

Remove anything that can burn, including wood mulch, grass, plants, shrubs, and any flammable man-made objects. If you do plant here, choose deciduous plants that are low-growing and maintain space between plants. Bare dirt or rock mulch is a better choice than wood mulch.



### 30-100 feet from the home

Favor deciduous trees and shrubs over evergreens or mix the two. Create a clear transition from the surrounding natural area to your yard. In the natural area, remove accumulation of dead trees and brush

on the forest floor and thin trees to maintain space between tree crowns.

## The Home Ignition Zone

**The Home Ignition Zone is your home and its surroundings out to 100-200 feet. You can make your home more Firewise by reducing the amount of fuel in your home ignition zone.**

### 100-200 feet from the home

For homes built on slopes and in pine plantations, the home ignition zone extends out to 200 feet.

Learn more at: [Firewise.org](http://Firewise.org)  
[dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fire](http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fire)  
 or contact your local fire department



## Protecting Your Home

Emergency responders cannot respond quickly if they cannot locate or safely reach your property. You can help them by identifying your neighborhood and home with legible and clearly marked street names and addresses. You should also provide adequate access for emergency vehicles to drive down your driveway. Minimum standards recommended by the Firewise Program suggest that driveways should be at least 12 feet wide with 15 feet of overhead clearance from surrounding vegetation.\* Tree branches and other plant vegetation above and along driveways should be trimmed back on a regular basis. Long driveways and driveways with curves may need to be wider than 12 feet.

\*Also, be aware of local ordinances and local fire department recommendations which can be more restrictive.

