



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

OPERATIONAL ORDER # 47

SUBJECT: Prescribed Burn Guidelines

CONTACT: Division of Forestry 651-296-5966

DATE: March 1, 2010

SUPERSEDES: Operational Order #47 Prescribed Burn Guidelines July 26, 2004

I. PURPOSE:

To guide and support the Department's use of prescribed burning in achieving natural resource management objectives. (Burning piles of natural vegetative material is covered by existing permit requirements and not this policy).

II. GENERAL POLICIES:

- A. The Department will establish and maintain a system of coordination and oversight to ensure the wise use of fire as a resource management tool. This will consist of a Statewide Prescribed Burn Committee and Regional Prescribed Burn Committees in each Region. These bodies will be comprised of a balanced representation of knowledgeable persons involved in prescribed burning. They will provide the leadership and support necessary to foster a safe and effective prescribed burn program.
- B. Department of Natural Resources disciplines and programs may use prescribed burning for managing ecosystems, particularly those determined to be partially or totally fire dependent.
- C. All prescribed burn projects on DNR lands, whether contracted or conducted by agency personnel, must be implemented in compliance with a written plan. This plan must have clearly defined and attainable resource management objectives and provide for the protection of public safety including human life, health, and property.
- D. Each prescribed burn shall be conducted by qualified personnel. The Minnesota DNR has established a two-track qualification system for prescribed burn personnel. When burning on DNR administered lands, DNR personnel will meet either Minnesota agency or National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards. When working with cooperating agencies on prescribed burns, DNR personnel will meet qualifications set out in the NWCG Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide unless local agreements specify otherwise. (see [DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook](#) and the Minnesota Supplement to the Fire Qualification System Guide PMS 310-1).
- E. Non-DNR personnel may be involved in burning on DNR lands. This may include volunteers, landowners, fire departments or non-profit organizations. Non-DNR personnel will be expected to meet the training requirements outlined in Section III. F. of this policy, however, the prescribed burn training and fitness standards of other organizations may be accepted at the discretion of the administering discipline or their designee.

- F. DNR funded prescribed burning contracts will require vendors and their employees to meet the same qualifications as DNR personnel.
- G. DNR employees may be involved in burning on non-DNR lands. This may include lands owned and administered by other agencies, private management organizations and private owners. In these cases, DNR employees will meet or exceed the qualifications required for burning on DNR administered land.
- H. When initiating and conducting burns on non-DNR lands, the responsible discipline must ensure that a Grant of Permission to Burn Lands Not Administered by the DNR (form NA-1973) is completed prior to the burn and retained with the records.
- I. Liability for any damages resulting from the prescribed burn will be the responsibility of the DNR division initiating the burn project unless there is a previous agreement to share or transfer this responsibility. An agreement to share or transfer liability requires approval in writing from the appropriate Regional or Division Managers.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Prescribed Burn Unit Plan

1. Each prescribed burn shall be conducted with the guidance of a Prescribed Burn Unit Plan. The DNR division administering the property to be burned (or its designee) is responsible for ensuring that a plan is prepared by an accountable resource manager (e.g. Parks and Trails Resource Specialist; Area Forest Supervisor; Area Wildlife Manager; Scientific and Natural Area Specialist; or designee). Many plans will be interdisciplinary efforts and may contain multiple burn units and/or cover multiple years. (See [DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook](#) — *Prescribed Burn Unit Plan*)
2. The plan writer is responsible for identifying and soliciting input in a timely manner from all DNR disciplines, offices and relevant parties who have a need to know about, or vested interest in, the proposed use of prescribed burning in the management unit. This affords these parties the opportunity to provide the preparer information about natural resource considerations, community concerns, fire safety and other issues which should be considered.
3. Burn Unit Plans must be reviewed and signed by a Burn Boss 1 or 2 qualified for the complexity and fuel type indicated in the plan. Plans may receive additional review and approval as required by individual Division policy.
4. The administering discipline (or its designee) is responsible to ensure that the plan is updated as changes in resource, safety, or other conditions warrant.
5. The administering discipline (or its designee) is responsible for providing the appropriate Area Forestry Office (or its designee) with the current Prescribed Burn Unit Plan prior to obtaining a burning permit.

B. Open Burning Permits (Variances)

1. The administering discipline (or its designee) is responsible for obtaining an Open Burning Permit from the appropriate Area Forestry Office or local authority for each burn as described under Section IV. Procedures. A variance permit is needed for all

running fires and when the burn takes place outside of the standard burning hours or during a burning restriction period. A Burning Permit Variance must be obtained by the administering discipline from the DNR Area Forestry Office or their designee.

C. Conducting the Burn

1. The Burn Boss is responsible for all activities relating to the on-site execution of the burn. The Burn Boss is responsible to obtain burning permit activation on the day of the burn.
2. The Burn Boss is responsible for completing the Go/No-Go checklist and the Report section of the Prescribed Burn Unit Plan for each prescribed burn. (See [DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook](#)) This will serve as a permanent record of management activity for the site.
3. Any incidents that damage private property, adversely affect the public or result in injury to burn personnel shall be promptly reported. (See [DNR Safety and Health Manual](#) and/or DNR Operational Order 105 for accident and incident reporting procedures.)
4. Any DNR prescribed burn that results in an escape will be promptly reported to the appropriate Area Forestry Office who will ensure that an Individual Fire Report is prepared and necessary action is taken as per established policies. The definition of an escaped prescribed burn shall be found in the DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook. The Regional Prescribed Burn Committee will initiate a review and the lessons learned will be shared with department personnel involved in prescribed burning.

D. Accomplishment Reporting

1. Each discipline will designate persons (e.g. Regional Committee members, Regional Fire Staff, Program Directors, etc.) responsible for preparing an annual summary of their prescribed burn accomplishments during the calendar year. This report will summarize the number of burns and total acres burned by cover type.
2. The Division of Forestry is responsible for compiling an annual, department-wide summary of prescribed burn accomplishments for the calendar year. These figures will also be supplied to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to satisfy smoke management requirements.

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Each administering discipline is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the results of prescribed burns conducted by their personnel.

F. Training

1. Each discipline is responsible for training and maintaining qualification records for its personnel. The Division of Forestry will maintain a centralized record keeping system for persons needing to have an Incident Qualification Card to work with agency partners. To the greatest extent possible, disciplines will work together to coordinate and provide training in a cost-effective and time efficient manner.

2. Prior to burning each year, all prescribed burn personnel will participate in an annual refresher/orientation session that includes the required elements of the NWCG Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training (RT-130). The focus will be on safety issues, equipment use and other relevant prescribed burn topics.
3. To a limited extent, people (e.g. volunteers, Sentence to Serve, new employees, etc.) may work on a burn as a Fire Fighter Trainee (FFTT). FFTTs will have received training that includes the required elements of the Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training (RT-130), be appropriately equipped and have received orientation on the use of Personal Protective Equipment before the burn begins. They will work only under the direct oral and visual control and supervision of a qualified crew member (i.e. FFT2 or higher).

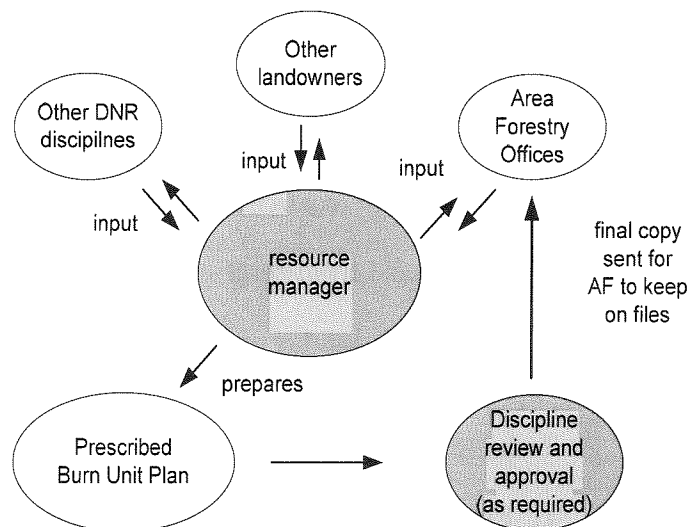
G. Personal Safety and Fitness Requirements

1. All participants on a prescribed burn will use appropriate safety clothing and equipment. (See [DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook](#) — *Personal Protective Equipment Required for Prescribed Burning* and *PPE-A Short Guide For Wildland Firefighters.*)
2. Physical fitness requirements will be specified by an individual’s condition of employment or determined by their supervisor where no employment condition exists.
3. Employees are responsible for informing their supervisor of any condition that may limit them in performing a job on a prescribed burn. In addition, it is the responsibility of the employee’s supervisor, lead worker, or the Burn Boss to take preventative action in situations where an employee appears physically incapable of performing without risk of injury to the employee or other staff working an incident due to work demands.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. Development of Prescribed Burn Unit Plan

1. Resource manager solicits appropriate input from the Division of Forestry and other affected/interested parties regarding the use of prescribed burning on the proposed management unit.
2. Resource manager prepares Prescribed Burn Unit Plan and solicits permission for non-DNR land.
3. Resource manager obtains appropriate plan review and approval.
4. Copy of Prescribed Burn Unit Plan is sent to Area Forestry Office.
5. The completed Prescribed Burn Unit Plan will remain in effect until updated in response to changes in the resource, safety, or other conditions.



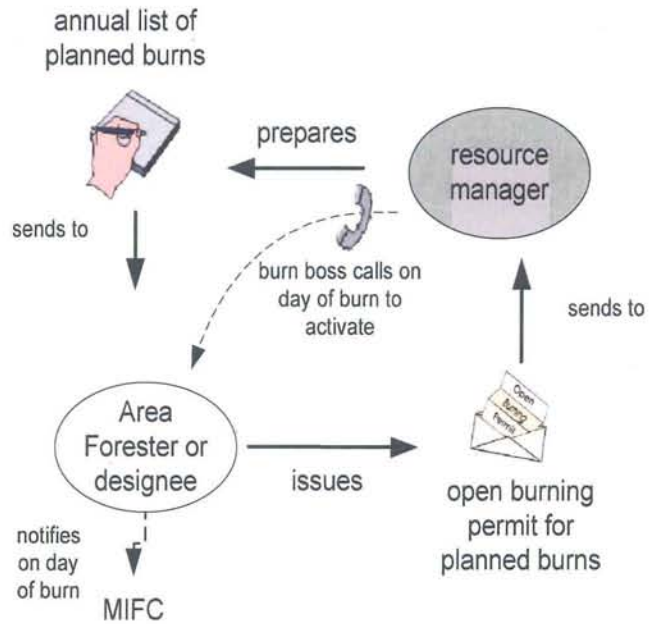
B. Seasonal Open Burning Permits for Prescribed Burns

As required by law, anyone conducting an open fire must have a valid Open Burning Permit. Resource managers can request an Open Burning Permit from the Area Forestry Office for all prescribed burns planned for the upcoming season as follows:

1. Resource manager prepares a list of planned burns for the upcoming season. Each site must have a completed Prescribed Burn Unit Plan.
2. List is sent to Area Forestry Office.
3. Area Forester prepares an Open Burning Permit covering the planned burns (one single permit, or multiple permits depending on the situation).
4. Open Burning Permit(s) are sent to resource manager.

C. Day of Burn

1. The Burn Boss obtains day of burn Burning Permit Activation.
2. Area Forestry Office gathers necessary information, completes the MNICS Daily Prescribed Burn Notice and forwards it to MIFC.



Approved by:

Mark Holsten, Commissioner

Date: 3-30-10

