



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2008 POLICY FACT SHEET **Campfires**

It is needed because

Currently, M.S. 88.15 refers to the person “who starts a campfire.” In some recent investigations, it was difficult to prove “who lit the match” for campfires that got away. In each case, several people admitted maintaining the campfire once it was burning, but no one would admit who actually started it. The proposed statute changes will make responsible members of a group liable for controlling and extinguishing their campfire.

Amending M.S. 88.15, subd. 2 will make it possible for enforcement authorities to hold accountable the participants responsible for campfires that escape and cause wildfires.

Major elements

This initiative will amend the language in M.S. 88.15, subd. 2 to say that in addition to a person who starts a campfire being responsible for it, a person who maintains the campfire is also responsible for preventing it from spreading and extinguishing it before leaving the site.

Priority-setting

At this time, the statute language just refers to the person “who starts a campfire.” In some recent investigations, it was difficult to prove “who lit the match” for campfires that got away. In each case, several people admitted maintaining the campfire once it was burning, but no one would admit who actually started it. The proposed statute changes will make responsible members of a group liable for controlling and extinguishing their campfire.

Key measures and outcomes

It will be the obligation of law enforcement to prove that the persons held liable are the ones who should

have had the fire under their control. Good investigative work determines the responsible parties.

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