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# News Release

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## **Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Urge Visitors to Comply with Campfire Ban**

**Springerville, AZ - May 7, 2020** – The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests firefighting resources have responded to 8 abandoned campfires and 18 illegal campfires since implementation of the ban. Despite the April 22 [campfire ban order](#), which prohibits igniting, building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, the popularity of campfires continues to grow. The ban is in effect until June 30, 2020, or until rescinded, and applies to all charcoal grills, barbecues, and coal and wood burning stoves. Pressurized liquid or gas devices (stoves, grills or lanterns) with shut-off valves are exempt from the campfire ban in an area at least three feet from any flammable materials.

For the health and safety of visitors, communities, and forest service staff, the national forest is asking all visitors to follow the campfire ban, which was enacted for all national forests in Arizona to minimize the exposure of COVID-19 to firefighters and reduce the impacts of poor air quality on those suffering from and at risk of COVID-19.

On average, human-caused fires make up 80 percent of wildfires, with abandoned campfires being the number one human-caused fire. Wildland firefighting is a hazardous profession, which limits the ability to social distance during missions. Reducing the probability of human-caused fires by restricting campfires lessens the risk of exposing fire personnel. The campfire ban is an effort to prevent overtaxing federal, state and local fire and medical resources.

"We are seeing a large increase in forest users for this time of year, twice the number normally seen during holiday weekends like Memorial Day. The campfire ban will help reduce preventable human-caused wildfires, such as abandoned campfires, which increase firefighter exposure to COVID-19 and decrease our ability to respond if just one member of a crew was exposed," said the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests' Forest Fire Management Officer, Gary Strickland.

The Forest Service remains focused on the safety and well-being of employees and communities. The Federal workforce has continued to ensure mission critical and essential services continue to meet the Nation's needs. This dedication to the American public continues uninterrupted.

More information about the campfire restrictions on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests can be found on the [Southwestern Region webpage](#). For recreational opportunities, please visit the [Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests webpage](#) and/or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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