



# What is?

## **RED FLAG WARNING**

A Red Flag Warning is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) to alert land management agencies about the onset, or possible onset, of critical weather and fuel moisture conditions that could lead to rapid or dramatic increases in wildfire activity.

The weather criteria for Red Flag Warnings vary and in the Pacific Northwest, these forecasts are issued by NWS offices in Seattle, Spokane, Portland, Pendleton, Medford, and Boise for specific zones of similar vegetation and topography. As you can see by the following image, each forecast office covers many fire weather zones.

What weather criteria are considered?

- Drought conditions
- Expected afternoon high temperatures
- Minimum relative humidity
- Daily vegetation moisture calculations
- Sustained 20 foot winds, wind gusts, or erratic winds
- National Fire Danger Rating System index of “High or Higher”
- Haines Index of atmospheric stability
- Dry lightning
- Frontal passages

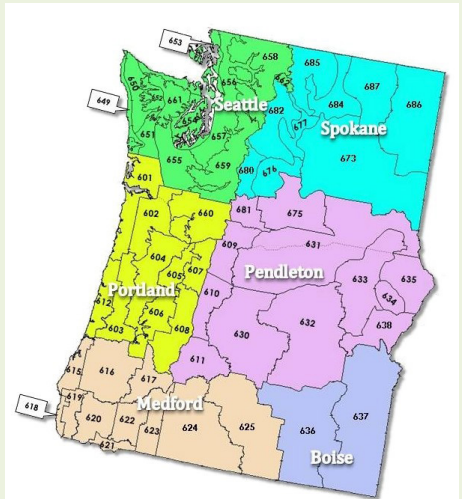


Image courtesy of Pacific Northwest Geographic Area Coordination Center

# FIRE FACTS

## How do fire agencies respond to a Red Flag Warning?

Fire agencies respond to the forecasts by pre-positioning additional firefighting resources, increasing detection flights and prevention patrols, or extending staffing hours. The forecasts are critical information for planning prescribed burn ignitions.

## What does a Red Flag Warning mean for the public?

A Red Flag Warning means high fire danger with increased probability of a quickly spreading fire in the area within 24 hours. A burn ban may be issued and the public asked to avoid burning. Some other things the public can do to be more mindful on Red Flag Warning days:

- Secure safety chains on trailers
- Don't drive over dry grass or vegetation
- Postpone target shooting
- Avoid yard work or welding near dry vegetation
- Report any fire, smoke or unsafe activity which could lead to a fire

### For more information:

Northwest Coordination Center: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/predict/weather.aspx>

National Weather Service Fire Weather: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ridge2/fire/>

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