



Fire Watch Set For Today: Area Fire /Police Officials Emphasize Safety

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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RED FLAG WARNING

When

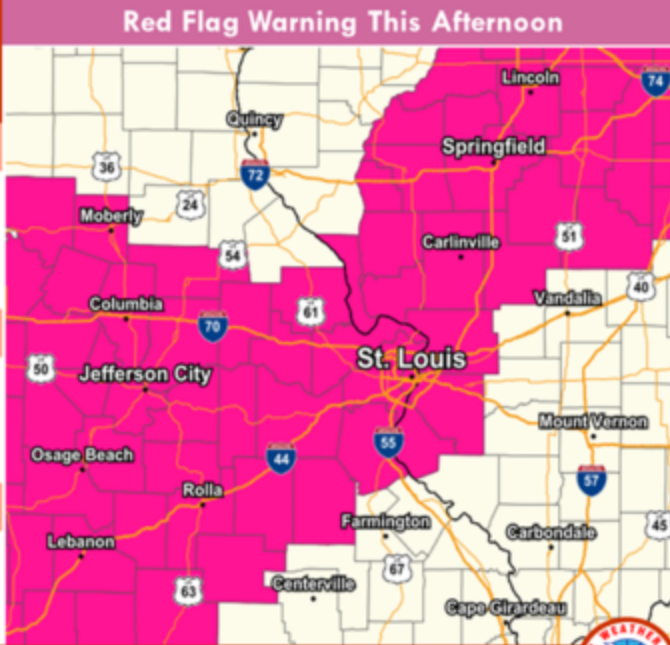
A Red Flag Warning is in effect from **1:00-6:00 PM this afternoon** when there will be a combination of low humidity, strong winds, and dry fuels.

Impacts

This combination of strong winds, low relative humidity, and dry fuels can contribute to **extreme fire behavior**.


Actions

- Be extremely careful with open flames.
- Consider burning on a different day.
- Be sure campfires are completely extinguished.



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MADISON COUNTY - The National Weather Service in St. Louis and area fire chiefs emphasized the importance of abiding by a Red Flag Warning from 1 p.m until 6 p.m today.

The National Weather Service said a combination of low humidity, strong southwesterly winds, and dry fuels will make conditions favorable for extreme fire behavior. Fires that do start have the potential to spread quickly, the NWS said.

Several area fire chiefs released statements advising not to burn today.

Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said Edwardsville doesn't cover that much of a rural type of terrain, but said there are pockets of land they have to be concerned about. He said there are some areas with woodland and urban interface areas."

"It is important to keep people advised of the situation on dry days and times like this," he said. "Today is not a good day to light a fire. We are generally concerned with the welfare of all the communities in the region. The fire departments all help each other out. It is important to get this message of the Red Flag Warning out to the public."

Whiteford continued and explained the Red Flag Warning with more details:

"A Red Flag Warning means there is a rather extreme fire hazard," he said. "There should be no outdoor burning during this time. The risk of embers rapidly spreading fire out of control is very high. People should also be careful with other heat-generating

activities like welding, grinding, and working with machinery in the grass or dry debris-covered areas. Even cigarette butts should be disposed of carefully making sure they are fully extinguished. Winds are predicted to be 15-25 mph with gusts up to 40 mph today. This combination of high winds and very dry fuels can cause fires to start and spread easily."

"Due to the National Weather Service issuing a fire weather watch for our area we will not be issuing any burn permits for the next couple of days. This will be re-evaluated on Thursday. Any questions please let us know," Bethalto Fire Chief James Schulte said.

The Wood River Police issued this warning to residents on Wednesday morning: "For the safety of all citizens, due to a wind advisory and dry conditions the Wood River Fire Chief has ordered a No Burning Day in the City of Wood River today, October 14, 2020."

Tuesday, firefighters battled multiple field fires throughout the Metro St. Louis region. The Fire Watch is for the whole Riverbend area.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)