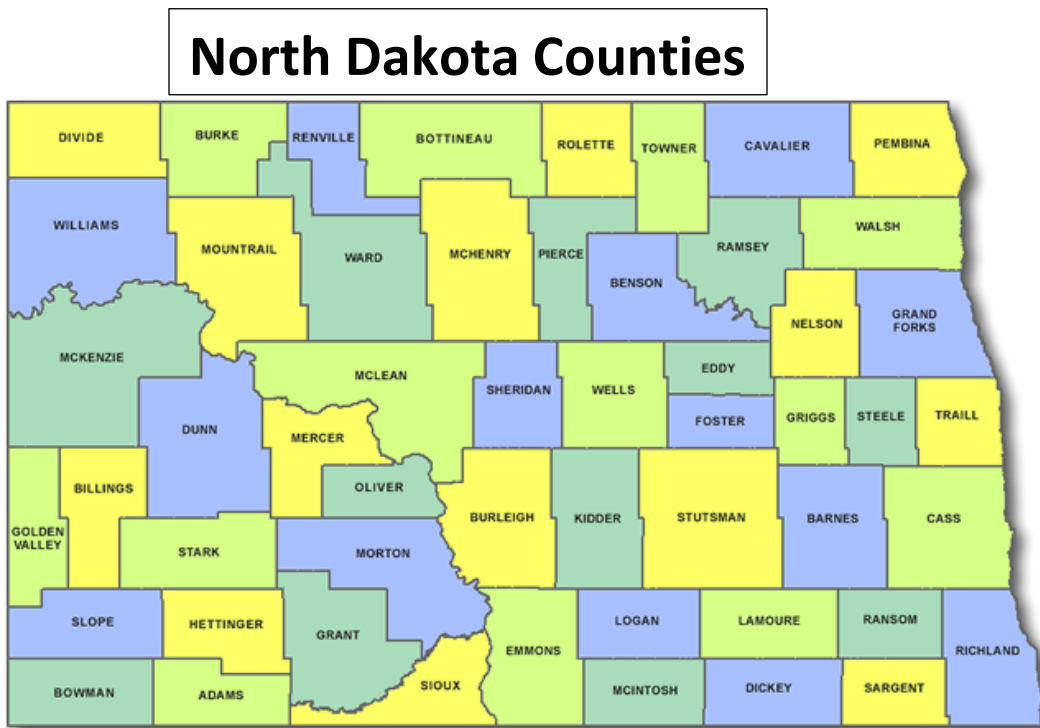


What is the Fire Danger Rating?

The Fire Danger Rating is a forecast of the **potential** for non-agricultural grasslands to **carry** fire. It provides an indication of fire potential for grasslands, including its ability to spread. The rating contains five levels: Low, Moderate, High, Very High, and Extreme. Should a fire ignite, it is more likely that it would grow or spread during higher rating days. The Fire Danger Rating is issued by the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory daily around 600 AM CDT (500 AM MDT) for each of North Dakota's 53 counties. This Fire Danger Rating is issued once each day. It is found online at <http://www.weather.gov/bis/fire>



What Does the Fire Danger Rating Mean to Me?

Your local fire service recommends certain guidelines based on the fire danger rating. The North Dakota Fire Danger Guide at <http://www.nd.gov/des/planning/fire-danger-awareness/> describes recommendations. For specific information on burn bans, contact your local fire officials, sheriff's office, the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services or the State Fire Marshall.

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Fire Danger Description</u>
Low	Weather and fuel indicators show the probability of erratic fire behavior is low.
Moderate	Weather and fuel indicators indicate some potential for erratic fire behavior with moderate rates of spread should a fire ignite.
High	Fires which ignite may be active. Expect moderate and occasional high rates of spread.
Very High	Fires spread rapidly and show erratic behavior. Dangerous burning conditions exist.
Extreme	Potential for large fires exists. Fires spread rapidly. Extreme fire behavior is probable. Critical burning conditions exist.

What is Fire Danger?

The most commonly accepted definition of Fire Danger is: **“The resultant descriptor of the combination of both constant and variable factors which affect the initiation, spread and difficulty of control of wildfires on an area.”** The various factors of fuels, weather, topography and risk are combined to assess the daily fire potential on an area. Fire Danger is usually expressed in numeric or adjective terms. It is a forecast of the **potential** for non-agricultural grasslands to **carry** fire. It is based on weather and grassland conditions. The highest threat period for grassland fire danger is usually before the Spring green-up (when grasslands are still in dormancy coming out of the winter season); and again in the late Summer into Fall (when the curing of grasslands lends to critical dryness in the moisture content of the various warm-season and cool-season grasses).

The five fire danger ratings are:

Low Moderate High Very High Extreme

Low:

Fuels do not ignite readily from small firebrands although a more intense heat source, such as lightning, may start fires in duff or punky wood. Fires in open cured grasslands may burn freely a few hours after rain, but woods fires spread slowly by creeping or smoldering, and burn in irregular fingers. There is little danger of spotting.

Moderate:

Fires can start from most accidental causes, but with the exception of lightning fires in some areas, the number of starts is generally low. Fires in open cured grasslands will burn briskly and spread rapidly on windy days. Timber fires spread slowly to moderately fast. The average fire is of moderate intensity, although heavy concentrations of fuel, especially draped fuel, may burn hot. Short-distance spotting may occur, but is not persistent. Fires are not likely to become serious and control is relatively easy.

High:

All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are attacked successfully while small.

Very High:

Fires start easily from all causes and, immediately after ignition, spread rapidly and increase quickly in intensity. Spot fires are a constant danger. Fires burning in light fuels may quickly develop high intensity characteristics such as long-distance spotting and fire whirlwinds when they burn into heavier fuels.

Extreme:

Fires start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious. Development into high intensity burning will usually be faster and occur from smaller fires than in the very high fire danger class. Direct attack is rarely possible and may be dangerous except immediately after ignition. Fires that develop headway in heavy slash or in conifer stands may be unmanageable while the extreme burning condition lasts. Under these conditions the only effective and safe control action is on the flanks until the weather changes or the fuel supply lessens.