

# Wildfire Potential Increases During Fall Curing

During the months of September through November, both crops and warm season grasses dry down and produce an increased potential for wild fires.

These hazards can be lessened with a little planning and information.



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Farm implements are the number one cause for wildfires in the fall. Campfires and outdoor burnings are second.

Before harvesting or doing any kind of outdoor burning...check your local forecasts for any elevation of fire risk.

If windy or excessively dry conditions will exist during your planned harvest or burn...consider waiting for until the elevated fire risk is gone.



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Farm implements should be clean and free of caked on grease or plant litter. Check for and fix oil leaks. Debris should be removed from hot engine or exhaust parts, bearings, belts and other moving parts.

If fires start, the embers can be carried by wind to nearby ditches, tree stands or grassy fields and start wildfires.

Dry and breezy conditions can spread these fires at a rapid rate.



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Campfires in the fall are enjoyable. However burning in dry or windy conditions can carry embers to other areas and start unplanned fires.

If outdoors when it is dry, do not throw lit cigarettes near vegetation. Instead extinguish them in a can.

Fire Departments tasked with putting out these kinds of fires could hold you responsible for the cost of putting the fire out if they can show your negligence.



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The National Weather Service website can give you current and forecast conditions as well as alerting you to the potential for fire danger.

If a fire weather watch is in effect...consider changing or delaying your plans for harvest or having fires going.

If a red flag warning is in effect...do not burn.  
Harvesting should be done with extreme caution.



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A fire weather watch is issued when a combination of wind speeds greater than 25 mph and relative humidity less than 25 % are forecast from 24 to 72 hours out.

If a fire weather watch is in effect for your area use caution when starting fires or harvesting. You may even want to consider changing your plans or having alternate plans in place.



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A Red Flag Warning is issued when a combination of dry fuels and specific weather conditions are either imminent or there is a high confidence level from the fire weather forecaster that conditions will occur within the next 24 hours.

Fuels in central Iowa are mainly native grasses and ditch grasses but can include stands of trees and crop stubble.

Weather conditions that are forecast or occurring that cause extreme fire growth are wind speeds greater than 25 mph along with relative humidity less than 25 %.



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## In Summary:

- Check the weather service website at [www.weather.gov/dmx](http://www.weather.gov/dmx) for the latest conditions and forecasts and to see whether there are any notifications for enhanced fire danger.
- Heed fire weather watches and especially red flag warnings.



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