

Outdoor Fire Restrictions in Gila County Begin

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(GLOBE, AZ)— With the current dry, windy, and hot weather conditions there is an increased danger of fire. Restrictions on open outdoor fires begin on Thursday June 9, 2016, for both the unincorporated areas of Gila County and the Tonto National Forest.

Gila County remains committed to helping residents protect their property from wildfires, as well as providing resources to the Tonto National Forest and local Fire Departments for quick response to fire starts. Gila County has facilitated the establishment of a total of 43 locations that have adequate water resources available for rapid response to fires. In the heavily forested areas, this allows for no more than a five minute response time from any fire start to an available water source. In Gila County there are at least 100 fire starts in a typical season.

Gila County Ordinance 11-02 stipulates that each time the Tonto National Forest issues fire restrictions, similar restrictions will apply to all unincorporated areas within Gila County. This excludes all cities, towns and Indian Reservation lands. The ordinance prohibits residents from building, maintaining, attending or igniting open outdoor fires, bonfires, campfires, or fireworks. Each violation pursuant to this Ordinance shall result in a civil penalty not to exceed \$500.00 for each violation. The complete ordinance can be found at: http://www.gilacountyaz.gov/government/board_of_supervisors/docs/Ordinances/Ord11_02OpenOutdoorFire.pdf under "Open Outdoor Fires." According to Sheriff Adam Shepherd, "The Gila County Sheriff's Office has a zero tolerance policy on violations of the County's Fire Ordinance and the public should expect our officers to be on full alert during this year's fire season."

The Tonto National Forest Restrictions prohibit most types of fire or fire-causing activities including smoking outside of a cleared area or operating internal combustion power tools, welding equipment and torches throughout the Forest. However, some developed campgrounds are exempted from the restrictions. PLEASE NOTE: all fireworks are prohibited on the forest at all times. Violation of the Tonto National Forest restrictions is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and imprisonment for up to six months. More information on the Tonto National Forest Fire Restrictions can be found at www.fs.usda.gov.

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