

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POINTER

MAY 2018

Understanding Wildfire Weather

Wildfire Activity by County: 1994–2013

Frequency of Wildfires
Greater or Equal to
300 Acres

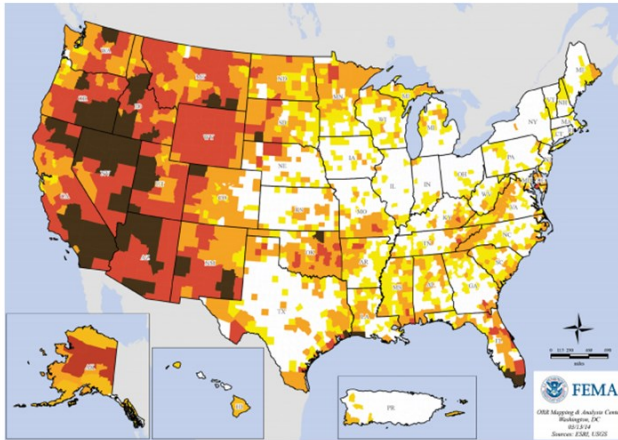
101–1,308

21–100

1–20

Counties where
largest wildfires
were less than
300 acres

Counties with
no recorded
wildfires



Most wildfires are caused by humans with a range of \$1 billion to \$2 billion spent each year on fire suppression. Idaho is wildfire country. Wildfires can occur with little to no notice and almost anywhere. Destruction from wildfires can greatly damage homes, businesses, infrastructure, natural resources, and agriculture. With wildfire season right around the corner, it is important to be aware of the causes and weather conditions that affect wildfire activity. Understanding the different types of fire weather notices can help you prevent accidental wildfires.

NWS Fire Weather Warnings

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues notices when weather conditions such as strong wind, low relative humidity, and high temperatures make wildfires more likely. NWS urges everyone to use extreme caution because a simple spark can cause a major wildfire.

FIRE WEATHER WATCH: NWS issues a fire weather watch when potentially dangerous fire weather conditions are possible over the next 12-72 hours.

RED FLAG WARNING: NWS issues a fire weather warning or red flag when fire danger exists and weather patterns that support wildfires are either occurring or expected to occur within 24 hours. Authorities may issue a fire weather watch before a warning, but a warning may also be the initial notification.

Take extra precautions when outdoors when fire weather notices are issued for your area. Be sure all campfires are cool to the touch before leaving. Do not use equipment that creates sparks on hot, windy days or park your vehicle over dry grass. You can visit the [NWS Fire Weather webpage](http://www.weather.gov/nws/fireweather) for current fire weather forecasts.



Image Credit: Brooke Taber, NWS Burlington



Make Your Home Firewise

If you live in the wildland/urban interface, take the time now to clear your property of fuel sources. Idaho Firewise provides information on what kind of vegetation to avoid planting on your property and how to create a buffer zone. The Firewise website has a list of demonstration gardens around the valley you can visit and see how to implement Firewise landscaping on your own property. Visit: idahofirewise.org/firewise-demonstration-gardens/

