Know Fire Danger in Your Area

June 2018

Disasters happen everywhere. We associate the Southeast with hurricanes. The Midwest with tornados. And the Northeast with winter storms. And in Washington, our disaster is wildfires. Just like with tornados, hurricanes and winter storms, wildfires have their season. We are in the first month of wildfire season, which typically runs until October. While we have not had a wildfire in Mukilteo in a long, long time, you can see signs of it in certain old tree stumps.

This past winter, we had a higher than average snow load in the mountains. This spring we also had a higher than normal rate of melting, which resulted in flooding in Eastern Washington. The snowpack melting off faster than normal means things will dry out sooner than normal. All the state will need is a rash of lightning strikes to kick things off.

Why am I being so morbid? Because we are so mobile. We all need to be aware of our surroundings as we travel around the state this summer. Know what the fire danger is in your area. Know how to get out quickly if necessary. Pay attention to official warnings, like evacuation notices. And be careful with any open flame, be it campfire, grill, fireworks, or cigarette. You may think it’s out, but the wind can pick the tiniest spark and reignite it.

Being careful with open burning applies here at home too. There are times that we have a burn ban in Mukilteo, either because of air quality or because of fire danger. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency ([www.pscleanair.org](http://www.pscleanair.org)) makes the determination on the air quality burn bans. Mukilteo Fire makes the determinations on fire danger burn bans. Often you’ll see a Snohomish County burn ban, issued by the county fire marshal, which does not apply within the city limits of Mukilteo. When it dries out enough for Mukilteo to have a burn ban, you know things are REALLY dry and probably really windy!

Even though the Fire Department rarely institutes a burn ban, we do have rules for open burning and recreational outdoor fires. Keeping them small, use the right kinds of fuel, don’t use a burn barrel, and be a good neighbor. For additional details, refer to our website, [www.mukilteowa.gov/fire/prevention](http://www.mukilteowa.gov/fire/prevention). Have a safe summer!