

Burning debris – Precautions

When burning debris, the ANPC have stated that the following precautions must be observed to avoid the spread of fire. Unfortunately many uncontrollable fires are caused due to lack of care in following these provisions.

Humidity of the air - the greater the humidity of the plant material, the less its ease of combustion. Burning on wet days makes it difficult to spread the burn to contiguous or nearby fuels. Fires should be carried out on days with high air humidity.

Air temperature - high temperatures make fuels drier and more likely to combust. In these days, an eventual "escapade" of the burning could lead to a fire of disastrous consequences. Avoid burning on hot days.

Wind - is responsible for the oxygenation of combustion and entrainment of sparks that can cause fire outbreaks over considerable distances and by the inclination of the flames over other fuels that do not matter to burn. Avoid burning on a windy day, especially if it has a variable direction. The wind should not blow towards areas of high accumulation of forest fuels.

Fuels – The fuels that are most common in the spread of fires include plant materials, waste from agricultural or forestry activities, such as, grass, tree branches, potato branch, etc.

Fuel, together with heat and oxygen, is one of the essential components for burning. Any contact should be avoided between the bonfire and the fuels which are not intended to be destroyed. To do this, a strip of at least 2 meters wide and deep enough to reach the mineral layer, that is, a level where the soil does not present combustible material, should be cleaned around the bonfire.

This cleaning will prevent fire from escaping from control by contact with adjacent fuels.

Slope - prevent making fires in places where the slope is steep. Incandescent material may free itself from the fire and roll down the slope causing fire.

Gradual feeding - the campfire where it is intended to destroy the agricultural plant material should be fed gradually to avoid the production of too much heat and a high emission of sparks. The material to be burned should be gradually added in small amounts, thus reducing the probability of uncontrolled burning.

Surveillance - permanent and careful surveillance is essential for the proper performance of a fire. The person responsible for the burn should be aware of the most likely forms of fire escape from the bonfire boundaries. This may be by emission of sparks (airway), by heating fuels adjacent to the fire or by conducting heat on land with a lot of buried fuel. Vigilance should always be prolonged several hours beyond the total extinction of the fire.

Water - in order to avoid any emergency during the burning, it is necessary that water is always accessible, either through containers or through hoses connected to the public network, to wells or springs. Water will also serve to make the final aftermath more efficient.

Utensils - agricultural implements such as rakes, shovels and hoes may be used to create adequate space for burning, to more easily control the fire and to assist in the final extinction of combustion.

Aftermath - a large number of fires cause fires long after they have been presumably extinguished. A proper aftermath is as important as good fire conduction. In addition to the extinction of live flames from the burning, the aftermath shall also include the suppression of any slow combustion that develops at internal levels, not directly observable, namely within the ashes and in the organic layer of the soil.

The utensils should be used to stir the burn zone, erasing any residual burning materials. The hot ash should not be spread on thin, dry material. Water should be used for a more efficient final extinguishing.

Information - any clarifications or doubts regarding the execution of the fires can be duly clarified with the Municipality of the area of residence or with the regional offices of the Institute of Nature Conservation and Forestry.