



FIREWISE

KENAI PENINSULA

AUGUST: FIRE PREVENTION IN THE OUTDOORS

Welcome August rains may be mingling with clear sunny Alaska skies but don't think those isolated showers are going to reach the forest floor – not yet anyway. The tree tops are still green, full, and the vegetation is thirsty from our warm months and long days. Forests with closed canopies can especially prolong summer's fire risk by keeping moisture from reaching those fine-cured fuels on the forest floor. While enjoying Alaska's great outdoors, stay aware that there are other fire risks to consider beyond campfires. After all, it only takes one spark to burn an entire forest.

Cigarettes: If you smoke, you need to be extra responsible with your cigarette butts when you are outside. Cigarettes burn very hot and can stay lit long after you have discarded them. Never throw butts from your car as they are often blown into roadside vegetation, use an ash tray and remember the adjacent forest

can still be tinder dry. If you put your cigarette in the trash make sure it is completely out.

ATVs: When you drive your four-wheeler or other all-terrain vehicle, the engine gets hot. Park that machine on a mound of dry grass and you may well start a wildfire. Be aware of where you park, and minimize the risk at all times. Have water to douse an errant spark.

Machinery: Any time you use machinery near combustible fuels, you need to be wary. A spark from a tool or combustion engine can easily fall in the wrong pile of dry grass and spread before you can stop it. All machinery should be fitted with a spark arrester. Again, have water on hand for emergencies.

For more information on ways you can be FireWise, go to www.firewisekp.com contact FireWise Kenai Peninsula 260-4262 or sharon.roesch@alaska.gov.