



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service & Ministry of Defence Newsletter

Issue 1, February 2024

What is the Surrey context for Wildfire risk?

Surrey's diverse topography, characterised by varying terrains and slopes, coupled with numerous common and heathland areas surrounded by residential and commercial premises' increase the risk and impact of wildfires.

Several military ranges in Surrey use live ammunition for training purposes which also increases wildfire risk. Wildfire prevention measures such as regular forest management, creating firebreaks, and controlling human activities (such as smoking/campfires) in high-risk areas can all help to reduce the risk of a wildfire.

Wildfire season 2023

Over the past year, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has been fortunate to encounter a minimal number of wildfire, largely attributed to wetter and cooler weather. However, despite this relatively quiet year, it remains crucial for the public to stay informed about the potential repercussions of wildfires and be aware of preventative measures.

To help you in protecting your property we have developed a Wildfire Prepared Leaflet, this guide offers valuable tips on how to help protect your property from wildfire. The leaflet is included as an attachment to this newsletter. Please get in touch if you require hard copies. There is also further wildfire advice on our website- wildfire- Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk).

Equipment and resources across Surrey to deal with wildfires:

- 4 Wildfire stations- Farnham, Camberley, Woking and Chobham
- 4 Unimogs
- 10 MRV's (Multi role vehicles)
- 1 Wildfire Support Unit
- 12 Wildfire Subject Matter Advisors
- 1 National Wildfire Tactical Advisor
- 5 Drones

What Surrey Fire and Rescue Service are doing to manage wildfires

- Increased wildfire training has been given to crews and Joint Fire Control.
- Wildfire Personal Protective Equipment purchased.
- Additional x4 vehicles have been adapted to attend wildfire incidents.
- SFRS crews regularly visit heathland sites for familiarisation and training exercises.
- Firefighters are made aware of the conservation importance of heathland.
- Rural Affairs Team work with land managers, Ministry Of Defence and other stakeholders to show how they can support in the emergency phase of an incident and the preparation for it.
- The Education Team deliver lesson plans to school children around wildfire awareness during summer months
- SFRS use media campaigns to deliver wildfire safety messages- and work with neighbouring services to produce joint messaging.





Defence
Infrastructure
Organisation

Management of Fires on Ministry of Defence (MOD) land

Our role in Fire Management means we are responsible for the maintenance, preservation and conservation of the land, allowing it to offer much needed habitats for a variety of flora and fauna to thrive, and for the enjoyment of the public now and for future generations.

What we do to prevent fires on MOD land

We take our role in trying to prevent and control fires very seriously. We monitor the risk of fires across the Defence Training Estate (DTE) throughout the year, working hard to maintain a balance between the needs of the military and the local communities in which we sit. We use a range of measures to prevent and control fires, including mowing and grazing programmes to keep the grass short during the summer months; enforcing ammunition bans as necessary during extremely dry conditions; and employing fire watch schemes to ensure fires are constantly monitored.

What you can do to keep safe and reduce the risk of fire on the training

Safety of the military and the public is of paramount importance to us. If you're out enjoying access to the estate on the public rights of way, please remember the following basic principles:

- Campfires are not permitted.
- Don't pick anything up.
- Stay out of areas when red flags are flying, or red lights are lit.
- Check live [firing times](#) online; they can sometimes change so what you see on the ground takes precedence. There is never a fixed pattern of dates and times.

If you see a fire on the DTE, you should call 999 and ask for the Fire Service. You should always leave the area if a fire is reported / seen, and you should never attempt to fight a fire yourself.

We also have a wildfire warning system in place with signs posted at main entrances to the DTE:

Blue	Wildfires are very unlikely to occur.
Yellow	Wildfires are very likely to occur, will spread and be of moderate intensity.
Amber	Wildfires will occur spreading quickly and with significant intensity.
Red	Wildfires will occur spreading very quickly and with extreme intensity.

Should you have any further questions or concerns please contact sfrswildfire@surreycc.gov.uk. If there are set topics you would like to be featured within the next newsletter please get in touch.