



Multi-Agency MEDIA RELEASE

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SEDONA AND VERDE VALLEY AGENCIES LAUNCH BURN PERMIT WEBSITE

Cottonwood, AZ, December 15, 2021- Citizens residing within the jurisdictions of the Cottonwood Fire & Medical Department, the Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District, the Verde Valley Fire District or the Sedona Fire District will soon have the ability to apply for and activate burn permits online.

Beginning January 1, 2022, citizens are encouraged to visit vvburnpermits.org to request a residential burn permit, check burning restrictions or allowances, and to activate a burn.

In addition to the new website, community members will notice a few other changes. The most significant change will be for the residents and burn permit holders of the Verde Valley Fire District. In order to comply with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) requirements, burn permits will be valid only during the calendar year of issue. Also beginning on January 1, 2022, burn permits are valid for use at the address listed on the permit. If a resident needs to burn at a different property, a new permit will be required unique to that property. "We know there a number of residents in the [Verde Valley Fire] District who have had the same permit for several years, even decades, stated Verde Valley Fire Chief Danny Johnson. "As long as the burn permit holder remained the property owner, the permit did not expire. Thousands of burn permits have been issued over the years and it is nearly impossible to validate all of these permits. The annual permitting process provides us with a mechanism to provide permit holders with updated safety practices and pertinent information, at least on an annual basis."

Changes to the burn seasons and permitted burn hours are also forthcoming. Currently, each agency has different burning start and stop times or different burn seasons throughout the year. Beginning January 1st, burning is permitted between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm and burning will be permitted year-round, with the caveat that conditions are favorable for safe burning. Weather conditions, air quality, regional alerts and restrictions are evaluated daily in determining whether burning is permitted. It is possible that a burn day will be abbreviated as if conditions are favorable in the morning, but less than ideal in the afternoon, for example.

"We want to provide as many opportunities as we can for our residents to clear brush and organic material on their properties," Copper Canyon Fire & Medical Department Chief Terry Keller stated. "Over the last few years, we have encountered very dry conditions and this last Wildfire season was extremely active. We encourage residents take advantage of good weather and safe conditions to create defensible spaces on their properties, whether it is by clearing and burning brush or another practice such as hauling brush to a green waste collection site."

Verde Valley Fire & EMS Chiefs' Association (VVFCEA) President, Jon Trautwein of the Sedona Fire District commented on the regional partnership between the Sedona/Verde Valley agencies and the Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center, "We work very closely with one another in this region and often respond to incidents together. As a group, we have to consider methods and practices that allow each agency to provide the best service to its constituents in the most efficient manner. By adopting industry best practices and standardizing our operations where feasible, we can complete this objective. Getting on the same page with burn regulations and the permit process is one example of the benefits of our partnership."

The burning of inorganic material, garbage, plastic, hazardous materials is not permitted. Additionally, poison oak, sumac or ivy, and oleander is prohibited. Residential burn permits are designated for the burning of dry, organic yard waste. Ceremonial or special event burn permits, commercial or construction burn permits, or variance requests must be obtained directly from the fire department or fire district administrative offices.

Chief Ron Sauntman of the Cottonwood Fire & Medical Department commented on the NFPA Firewise USA® program, “We want to encourage residents learn more about the Firewise® program. It is a collaborative program that we are working to implement here in the City of Cottonwood, which includes public education and actions designed to increase community awareness, preparedness, and fire resiliency. The Firewise® website provides good information and tips on how best to clear a defensible space around a structure.”

The website was developed by IT/GIS Webmaster Kenny Scott of the City of Prescott who also created the burn permit website utilized by the Prescott Regional Communications Center. “We are extremely grateful to the City of Prescott and their employees for making this a reality and very excited about the launch of this website,” stated Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center Manager, Marie Carpenter. “While we anticipate a slight decrease in non-emergency call volume related to burn permits, we understand that there a number of residents who are not inclined to use the website and that’s okay. Residents can still request a burn permit through their respective fire department or district office to receive a paper or emailed permit. Additionally, residents can always call into the dispatch center to find out if it is a burn day or to activate their burn permits at 928-649-1397.”

The Cottonwood Public Safety Communications Center is a division of the Cottonwood Police Department and provides dispatch services for Cottonwood Police Department, Cottonwood Fire & Medical Department, Verde Valley Ambulance Company, Sedona Fire District, Clarkdale Police Department, Verde Valley Fire District, Jerome Police Department, Jerome Fire Department and Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District. In 2020, the Communications Center activated 5,233 burn permits. Closing in on the end of the year, the center has activated 7,297 burn permits for 2021.

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