

# Working Safe in Drought Conditions:

## *Wildfire Prevention & Reporting for Woodlot Owners and Christmas Tree Producers*

Dry conditions mean high wildfire risk. Regular activities like mowing, pruning, and burning can quickly lead to uncontrolled fires. Prevention starts with awareness and preparation. Protect your land, workers, and community.

### Know the Risk Before you Work

- Check daily wildfire risk and burning restrictions - [novascotia.ca/burnsafe](https://novascotia.ca/burnsafe)
- Avoid high-risk activities during peak heat (10 AM–5 PM)
- Don't work on gusty or windy days
- Keep water, fire extinguisher, and shovel nearby
- Have a safety zone at the work site that “won't burn” i.e. gravel landing/plowed area/green field (these are used in case of an event that all you can do is get to somewhere that won't burn)
- Know the nearest civic # to your wood/tree lot prior to beginning work

### Forest & Tree Lot Fire Prevention

- Maintain fire breaks around blocks and access roads
- Mow or remove fine fuels like dry grass and needles between rows
- Prune lower branches to reduce the chance of fire spread
- Clearly mark emergency access routes for first responders
- Create and practice a fire evacuation plan with all workers

### If You See Smoke or Fire

Call 911 or your local fire department immediately.

#### **Be ready to report:**

- Exact location (GPS or landmark or nearest civic number to your location)
- Fire size and direction
- What's burning (forest, brush, equipment)
- Nearby risks (structures, powerlines)

### General Preparedness

Train all workers on:

- Wildfire hazards and how to report
- Evacuation and emergency procedures
- Post emergency contact information in visible areas
- Maintain clear access for fire vehicles and equipment
- Build a fire readiness kit (maps, contacts, first aid, safety tools)

### Burning Brush – ONLY WHEN PERMITTED

- Industrial burning permits are available by contacting your local DNR office and a site visit is completed.
- Confirm burning is permitted in your area: [novascotia.ca/burnsafe](https://novascotia.ca/burnsafe) or call your local fire department
- Clear a 5-meter safety zone around the burn site
- Have water, tools, and people ready
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Stay until the fire is completely out and cold

In Nova Scotia, wildfires are most often caused by human activity — over 60% of which begin with things like equipment use or improperly managed burns. With climate change increasing the frequency of drought conditions, even a small spark in a woodlot or tree stand can lead to fast-moving fires that threaten forests, homes, and entire communities.

Staying alert, following burn restrictions, and maintaining defensible spaces are critical. Your vigilance helps protect not only your operation, but also surrounding landowners, fire crews, and the natural environment we all depend on.