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STAGE I FIRE RESTRICTIONS TO BEGIN THURSDAY

The City of Missoula will join other West Central Montana fire agencies in enacting Stage I fire restrictions early Thursday morning.

Conditions are extremely dry, and there is little moisture in grasses and other fuels, said Missoula Fire Chief Jason Diehl. Fire danger is **VERY HIGH**.

“Things are drying out rapidly, and we expect more very hot weather,” he said.

Stage I restrictions apply to City open space and conservation lands. The restrictions prohibit smoking and any use of fire or open flame. Campfires and detonation of fireworks are prohibited year-round.

“We have some public conservation lands at the edges of the city that are precious to the community and are also prone to fire,” Diehl said. “That includes Mount Jumbo, Mount Sentinel and Waterworks Hill.”

The restrictions go into effect at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 7.

Mayor John Engen signed an Emergency Proclamation on Monday placing fire restrictions on all City open space and conservation land beginning Thursday. The Missoula Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution on Tuesday implementing Stage 1 restrictions for Missoula County, also beginning Thursday morning.

Missoula residents have traditionally worked together to prevent wildfires, Diehl said. When restrictions are necessary, people abide by them to keep everyone safe.

“Our citizens understand the dangers of wildfire,” he said. “We really appreciate their cooperation.”

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