

# Fire danger increasing at Hanford

On June 1, the wildland fire season started off with a bang — of thunder, that is.

That afternoon, starting at about 2 p.m., a series of storm cells swept across the Hanford Site and left in their wake *three* lightning-caused fires that were fed by high winds and drying vegetation. Approximately 1,200 to 1,300 acres were burned in the three fires.

The two largest fires, along Route 4 North and Route 1, were of primary concern because of the potential threat to site structures. The Hanford Fire Department dispatched 13 units and 20 personnel to these two fires. Incident command was established and a mutual-aid wildland fire strike team was requested from the Tri-County agencies under the Mutual Aid Agreement. Fire crews finally extinguished these two fires by 7 a.m. on June 2.



Five fire condition signs like this one are strategically located along site entry access roads. They serve as a fire safety tool for employees and site visitors.

The third fire was along State Route 24 near the entrance to the old Bonneville Power Administration town-site, also known as Midway. At Hanford Fire’s request, this fire was suppressed by Grant County Fire District No. 8.

After evaluating the condition of wildland fuels, the Hanford Fire Department changed the site fire condition signs to “Moderate Hazard” on June 3. Seasonal trends indicate that the fire hazard will increase to “Extreme” within the next few weeks.

Use caution when traveling around the site. Once the fire conditions signs are moved to “Extreme,” the following conditions will be in place:

- Open controlled burning will be discontinued for the duration of the summer wildland fire season.
- Off-road driving, where there is vegetation or natural fuel cover, is restricted to only those activities considered absolutely necessary, and then only in vehicles equipped with a means of communication, a portable fire extinguisher with at least a 2A rating and a shovel.
- Vehicles must not be allowed to idle when parked off paved roadways unless they are equipped with spark arresters and the appropriate shielding of the exhaust system.

If a fire occurs, notify the Hanford Fire Department immediately (dial 911 on site telephones or 373-3800 when using a cellular phone), even if you think the fire has been extinguished. The fire department will check the burn site to make sure the fire isn’t rekindled. ♦