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BURN BAN IN EFFECT FOR CATAWBA COUNTY

NEWTON, NC – Effective immediately, Catawba County prohibits all open burning across Catawba County, including within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. The ban applies to all open burning regardless of whether a permit was issued.

The open burning ban is authorized by the Catawba County Fire Marshal's Office per N.C. Fire Code Section 307 to help prevent the potential for increased wildfires due to extremely dry weather conditions in the County.

The local ban follows an open burning ban issued Nov. 7 by the N.C. Forest Service and their request for cooperation from local officials to extend the ban within their jurisdictions. Because of increased fire risk, the N.C. Forest Service has banned all open burning and canceled all burning permits for 25 North Carolina counties, including Catawba County. The issuance of new burning permits has also been suspended.

Open burning includes burning leaves, branches and other plant material in addition to the use of recreational fires, bonfires, and outdoor fireplaces. The ban does not apply to cooking fires, such as grills or outdoor cookers. In all cases, it is illegal to burn trash, lumber, tires, newspapers, plastics or other non-vegetative materials.

The ban will remain in effect until further notice. Local fire departments and law enforcement are assisting the N.C. Forest service with enforcing the ban, which carries a \$100 fine plus court costs of \$180 for violation.

Questions about the local ban can be directed to Catawba County Emergency Services by calling (828) 465-8230. For more information about the N.C. Forest Service's regional open burning ban, including deployment of the service's Fire Prevention Education Team to Western North Carolina, visit <http://ncforestservice.gov/> and click on the News page.

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