



FIRE SAFETY

Wildfires

Many of us enjoy spending time in the countryside when the weather is good, whether it's camping, going for a country walk, riding bikes or maybe even a picnic or BBQ. So it's important that everyone understands how easily a fire can spread in these environments, resulting in serious consequences both to humans, wildlife and also the natural surroundings of West Sussex's woods and heathlands.

In the UK we have some of the only Lowland Heath areas on the planet due to the unique climate, and our countryside provides us with areas for the following.

- Agriculture
- Horse riding
- Sporting pursuits
- Family holidays
- Walking
- Ecology
- Mountain biking
- Business

These lowlands are at risk of wildfires during the warmer months; many are accidental but there are unfortunate incidences where people commit arson. Whether that is an attempt to endanger life or the environment, these deliberate acts will not be tolerated and those caught committing arson could face a maximum prison sentence.



To help keep you and our countryside safe, we have come up with a checklist for what to do if there is a fire.



What to do

- Do not try and tackle the fire yourself.
- Call 999 and request the fire service.
- Give an accurate location of the fire, for example:
 - name of the nearest road;
 - access points;
 - visible land marks (pubs, farms, power lines, etc);
 - locally known names; and
 - map grid references (Ordnance Survey ideally or an A to Z).
- Move to a safe area and contact the local land manager if possible.
- If the fire is in a remote area, please meet emergency services at the access point so that you can guide them to the location.



What not to do

- Don't discard cigarettes.
- Don't have BBQs in unauthorised areas.
- Never leave a BBQ unattended.
- Don't start camp fires out on the commons.
- Don't discard rubbish – particularly reflective materials.
- Don't burn off garden rubbish during hot periods or if you live close to woodland or heathland.
- Don't have bonfires on hot days or during prolonged periods of dry weather.

Remember prevention is the key!

It's taken thousands of years to create the unique habitats that we have in the UK – a wildfire could destroy these in hours. Help West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service keep you safe this summer.