

Dufferin fire chiefs issue warning over recent dry and hot weather

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Fire chiefs in Dufferin County have raised their concerns about the level of fire danger due to dry and hot weather conditions.

A high fire danger rating was issued on June 1, effective immediately, applying to all municipalities across Dufferin County.

"We ask that residents avoid all unnecessary outdoor fire burning until the weather conditions change and we are able to return to normal levels of fire danger," said acting Orangeville Fire Chief Michael Richardson. "When danger levels are higher than normal, fire can spread more easily. If an outdoor fire is necessary, please be mindful of your surroundings."

The decision to enact the high fire danger level was made by a group of fire chiefs from local fire departments, including Grand Valley, Shelburne, Orangeville, Mulmur/Melancthon, and Rosemont.

Shelburne Fire Chief Ralph Snyder said the department's biggest concerns are uncut grass, fields, and the many forested areas in Dufferin County.

"We would like everybody to use extreme caution if they are having outdoor fires," said Snyder. "I would hope nobody would have a fire in any Dufferin County forests at this time of year or we might be fighting fires just like they are in Northern Ontario and Quebec."

The Shelburne & District Fire Department has responded to five no-loss outdoor fires year to date. In May, the local department responded to no-loss outdoor fires that burned 150 acres of grass.

The fire department has also responded as an aid to grass fires for other local departments, including Grand Valley, Rosemont, Honeywood, and Dundalk.

At the time of print, there is no formal fire ban on outdoor fires in Dufferin County, meaning residents don't need to report outdoor fires. If a formal ban is implemented, an alert will be issued.

"If we don't get significant rainfall within the next week, we will probably proceed to put a ban on," Snyder told the Free Press.

Residents are advised to call 9-1-1 as quickly as possible if they see a fire that has become out of hand.

"The quicker we can get there, the quicker we can get it under control. We're fully set up with our grassfire kits," said Snyder.

The Shelburne Free Press will be following developments in the local fire danger.