

# Call for caution | The next few days will be conducive to the outbreak of wildfires

After a cool and wet start to spring, good weather and heat are beginning to set in in Quebec, especially in the south of the province. The Society for the Protection of Forests Against Fire (SOPFEU) points out that over the next few days the weather conditions will be particularly conducive to the outbreak of vegetation fires at the edge of the forest and near municipalities. In spring, fallen leaves, grass and branches on the ground quickly dry up under the influence of wind and sun and thus become very flammable. Moreover, during the last week, 43 fires affecting 38.2 hectares (ha) of forest have declared themselves, all of human cause.

An anticyclonic ridge is moving over the province and will bring dry and hot weather for several days. The lack of precipitation and low relative humidity will increase the degree of vulnerability of the forest, especially in the regions of Témiscamingue, Outaouais, Laurentides, Lanaudière, Montérégie, Estrie, Centre-du-Québec and Chaudière-Appalaches.

## **Problematic waste burning**

As soon as the fire danger displays "high", the protection organization asks to avoid making fires. For spring cleaning, SOPFEU suggests that citizens take advantage of alternative solutions such as composting, green waste collection and ecocentres.

If a fire is absolutely necessary, you must first obtain authorization from your municipality or city in order to comply with the regulations in force. When permitted, the safest place to start a fire is in a fireplace with a spark arrestor. Whether in a hearth or in the open, a fire must always be made in an open space, sheltered from the wind and on a ground well cleared of all combustibles. In addition, a person must provide constant supervision. SOPFEU also reminds you that you must always extinguish your fire completely with water or sand before leaving the premises.

## **Statistics**

Since the start of the protection season, 58 fires have been started affecting 46.6 hectares (ha) of forest. One hundred percent of these fires are attributable to human activity. On average, SOPFEU records at this time of year, 76 fires for 54.3 ha of forest affected.

# Can I make a campfire or burn waste today?

The SOPFEU fire danger rating is a good guideline to follow! The appropriate behaviour to adopt for each level of fire danger is laid out below.

- **LOW**: This is a good time to burn waste and make campfires.
- **MODERATE**: Make only small fires.
- **HIGH**: Do not light fires or burn waste if wind speed exceeds 20 km/h.
- **VERY HIGH**: Fires should only be made in fire places equipped with standard spark arrestors, whose openings are no wider than 1 centimetre.
- **EXTREME**: Avoid making fires.

**Keep in mind!** When making a fire, be sure to use an adequate fireplace or make your fire directly on mineral soil, away from any combustible material.

**Tips from the pros!** Download the SOPFEU mobile app (available for iOS and Android) to get automatic alerts when the fire danger level in your area exceeds "high."