

WHAT IS...

A Red Flag Warning?

FIRE FACT SHEET

A Red Flag Warning is issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) to alert land management agencies about the onset, or possible onset, of critical weather and fuel moisture conditions that could lead to rapid or dramatic increases in wild-fire activity.

The weather criteria for Red Flag Warnings vary and in the Southwest, these forecasts are issued by the NWS office in Albuquerque for specific zones of similar vegetation and topography. As you can see by the following image, the forecast office covers many fire weather zones.

What weather criteria are considered?

- » Drought conditions
- » Expected afternoon high temperatures
- » Minimum relative humidity
- » Daily vegetation moisture calculations
- » Sustained 20 foot winds, wind gusts, or erratic winds
- » National Fire Danger Rating System index of “High or Higher”
- » Haines Index of atmospheric stability
- » Dry lightning
- » Frontal passages

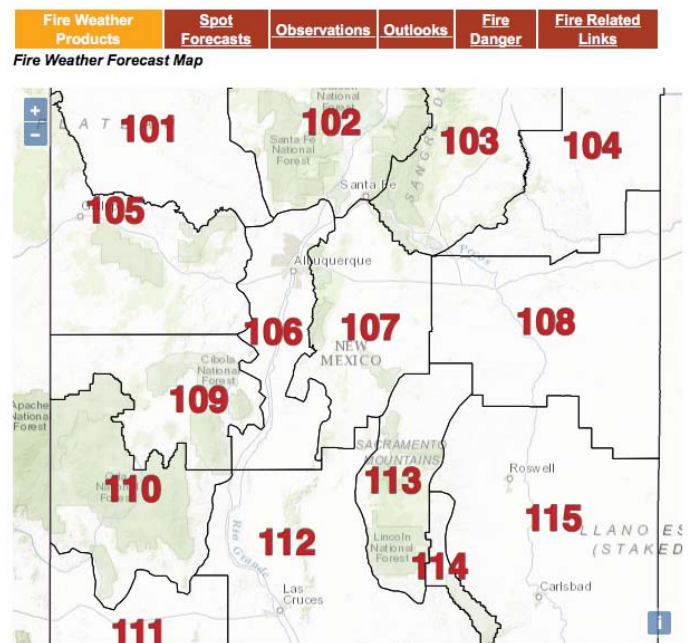
What does a Red Flag Warning mean for the public?

A Red Flag Warning means high fire danger with increased probability of a quickly spreading fire in the area within 24 hours. A burn ban may be issued and the public asked to avoid burning. Some other things the public can do to be more mindful on Red Flag Warning days:

- » Secure safety chains on trailers
- » Don't drive over dry grass or vegetation
- » Postpone target shooting
- » Avoid yard work or welding near dry vegetation
- » Report any fire, smoke or unsafe activity which could lead to a fire

How do fire agencies respond to a Red Flag Warning?

Fire agencies respond to the forecasts by pre-positioning additional firefighting resources, increasing detection flights and prevention patrols, or extending staffing hours. The forecasts are critical information for planning prescribed burn ignitions.



For more information:

LANL Fire Wildfire Management Planning Website: <http://www.LANLWildlandfire.com>