

# Summertime Safety

I hope everyone is enjoying a safe and wonderful summer here in beautiful Bear Lake Township!

As we head into the busiest part of the season, I'd like to address a few topics we receive questions about each year: **campfires, open burning, fireworks, and ATV/ORV trail safety.**

## Campfires vs. Open Burning

Our **Smokey Bear Fire Danger Sign** at the fire station is updated daily using fire danger information provided by the State of Michigan.

When the large yellow sign reads "**NO OPEN BURNING,**" it means that **burning leaves, brush, and natural debris for disposal is prohibited.** During these times, burn permits are not being issued due to elevated fire danger.

**Campfires are still permitted** as long as they are:

- Contained in a fire ring, surrounded by rocks, or in a small fire pit.
- Attended at all times.
- Used responsibly.

The only time campfires are prohibited is when the **Governor issues a statewide burn ban.** These bans are announced through television, radio, social media, and other news outlets.

Please remember:

- Burning **trash or dimensional lumber** is never permitted.
- Only natural firewood should be burned in campfires.

To determine whether open burning is allowed on any given day, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Burn Permit website:

<https://burnpermits.michigan.gov/>

You can also access it through the DNR website:

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr>

## Fireworks Safety

The Bear Lake Township Fire Department does **not** regulate the use of fireworks. Information regarding Michigan's fireworks laws, legal dates, and safety guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.michigan.gov/lara/bureau-list/bcc/fireworks>

Many people are unaware that a portion of the fees collected through Michigan's fireworks laws helps support **firefighter training and fire safety programs** across the State of Michigan. While these funds do not go directly to local fire departments, they help provide training opportunities and improve firefighter preparedness, ultimately benefiting communities like ours.

If the **"NO OPEN BURNING"** sign is posted or fire danger is high, I strongly encourage everyone to reconsider using fireworks, even if they are legally permitted. Even a single spark can ignite dry grass or brush during periods of elevated fire danger.

If you choose to use fireworks:

- Keep a hose or other water source nearby.
- Have a bucket of water available for used sparklers.
- Follow all Michigan laws and manufacturer safety instructions.
- Clean up all debris to help protect our lakes, rivers, and natural environment.
- Please be respectful of your neighbors, veterans, young children, and pets, who may be sensitive to loud noises.

### **ATV/ORV Trail Safety**

If you're enjoying our local ATV and ORV trails this summer, please pay attention to the **Emergency Trail Locator Signs** posted at intervals along the trail system.

In the event of an emergency, providing the number from one of these signs allows Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement to quickly locate you, helping us reach you faster when every minute counts.

Always ride responsibly:

- Wear a DOT-approved helmet and appropriate safety gear.
- Ride only on designated trails and areas where ORVs are permitted.
- Never operate an ATV or ORV while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- Ride at a safe speed and be aware of changing trail conditions and other trail users.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about the Bear Lake Township Fire Department or any of these safety topics, please don't hesitate to contact me.

#### **Fire Chief Mark A. Laskowski**

Bear Lake Township Fire Department

Phone: (231) 384-5785

Thank you for doing your part to help keep Bear Lake Township safe. By working together and practicing a little extra caution, we can all enjoy everything summer has to offer while protecting our families, neighbors, visitors, and first responders.

**Have a safe, fun, and happy summer!**

Best Regards,

**Mark A. Laskowski**

Fire Chief

Bear Lake Township Fire Department