

WILDFIRES COST

YOU get the bill



Let's face it, wildfires are costly. If you set fire to the landscape and it escapes and starts a wildfire, you are held liable for all suppression costs. This means the cost of firefighters, trucks, engines, dozers and even aircraft. The suppression costs could also include any damages in the areas where the fire occurred.

PUTTING *the fire out*

If you are found responsible for starting a wildfire, **you will receive a suppression bill** that will include the costs for all resources and personnel used in the suppression efforts, including resources from partnering agencies.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) bill will not include the cost of investigation services. Other agencies, such as fire departments, may either bill directly to the landowner or contribute their services free to the DNR.

RECEIVING *a bill*

Invoices will be mailed to the person found responsible for starting a wildfire within approximately 50 days. The DNR finance section will provide a 30 and 60 day late notice on any unpaid balance of that invoice. If you have made payment and continue to receive late notices, contact the person on the invoice to ensure proper payment was received.

FAILING *to pay*

If you fail to make payment on your suppression bill by the 90th day, the debt will be transferred to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for collection. They will work with a debtor to collect any remaining balances. The DOR will be the only State agency that will establish a payment plan, if needed. If the debt is transferred to DOR there will be an **additional surcharge of \$35 or 15%** whichever is greater to the total cost to cover administrative fees.

Wisconsin State Statute 26.14 (9) b Any person, firm, or corporation who sets fires on any land and allows it to become a forest fire, shall be liable for all expense incurred in the suppression of the fire by the state or town in which the fire occurred.

AFTER THE FIRE

YOU live with the results



Experiencing a wildfire on your property can be devastating. Although wildfire damage can be immense, often the danger is not over after the flames are put out. Tree mortality, invasive plants, erosion and road instability are just some of the dangers landowners face after a wildfire. Keep these tips in mind:

RISK POTENTIAL

- Be aware of, and use extreme caution, around trees, power poles and other tall objects that may have lost stability during the fire.
- Document damage with photographs before beginning any clean-up efforts.
- Stay out of burned forests on windy days as burned trees can easily fall.
- Do not touch any powerlines or propane tanks. Call the utility company or supplier instead.

VISUAL AESTHETICS

Fires bring change to the environment. Not only from the flames, but also from the equipment used to put the fire out. As a landowner, you will see these changes firsthand. It is important to remember that the landscape will recover. However for the next 5 years, you are at an increased risk of post-fire impacts:

- Equipment disturbance
- Tree mortality
- Invasive plants
- Erosion



WHO CAN HELP

Those impacted by a recent wildfire should reach out to these various entities for assistance:

- **Contact your insurance carrier** to discuss the details of your homeowners policy.
- **Check with your well water** and utility company, and propane or fuel oil supplier for an inspection before resuming service.
- **Consult a local garden center** for native seeding and replanting options.
- **Contact a local forester** to discuss options for forest health restoration.



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