

# Heath and Grass Fires

Heath and grass fires are at their most devastating during periods of hot and sunny weather when the grass and undergrowth is particularly dry. Fire can travel through gorse and dry undergrowth at astounding speed. Uncontrolled fires threaten leisure activities such as camping and caravanning. But as well as being potentially fatal to humans, the fires threaten wildlife and many areas of beauty across the county. Many animals are unable to escape from fire and will be burnt. Birds can fly away but the nests and eggs that are left behind are destroyed.



## What are the causes?

Uncontrolled fires happen for a variety of reasons, including people carelessly dropping cigarettes, leaving rubbish in an area, losing control of barbeques and bonfires, and in a small number of cases deliberately starting fires.

## How to prevent wild fires on heaths

Reducing or removing risk of wild fires in heath is essential. Everyone can help to reduce the risk of fire so that the countryside remains safe, by taking care during the dry summer months in particular. To prevent these devastating fires occurring by following this preventative advice:

- **Smoking - If out walking or having a picnic, be sure to dispose of cigarettes and other smoking materials carefully and ensure that they are fully extinguished.**
- **Barbeques - On most heaths, it is actually illegal to light any fire, including barbeques, without the permission of the landowner.**
- **Litter - All litter should be taken home, even a discarded glass bottle can start a fire.**



## What to do if a fire does break out in the countryside

- **Dial 999 and call the Fire Service without delay**
- **Keep well away from the fire - heath fires can spread fast**
- **Only attempt to put it out if you are certain it is safe to do so**
- **Notify any local farms If you can see livestock which may be affected, in order for them to prepare to evacuate them if necessary**



## Task

As a group talk about ways of preventing fires breaking out on heath and grass in the countryside. Break into groups and design a poster that can be used in car parks and places where the general public park in order to access the countryside.

- 1 **Identify the causes of heath and grass fires**
- 2 **Agree slogan for poster bearing in mind the good advice required to prevent heath and grass fires**
- 2 **Agree design and create the poster, to make it eye catching**
- 3 **All groups compare the posters that have been produced and remember the advice about preventing heath and grass fires**

