



NEWS RELEASE

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Hudgens: When Clearing Fall Foliage, Use Caution

Atlanta – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens urges Georgians to exercise caution when clearing fallen leaves this autumn.

Georgians should take the following safety measures when burning leaves:

- Some jurisdictions require burn permits. Be sure to check with your local fire department to see if a permit is required.
- Don't burn leaves on a windy day or when conditions are extremely dry.
- Clear leaves, weeds, brush and other vegetation at least 30 feet from your home; never pile leaves close to the home. If you bag your leaves, store bags away from your home.
- Do not discard cigarettes near leaves and other dry vegetation.
- Keep a water hose or bucket of water nearby to put out any stray flames or sparks.

In 2014, there were 8,891 brush and grass fires reported through the Georgia Fire Incident Reporting System. There were four fatalities and fourteen injuries in connection with these types of fires. Property loss from brush and grass fires totaled \$1.2 million last year.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about fire safety, please call the Georgia Department of Insurance at (404)656-2070 or toll free at (800) 656- 2298.