



Office of Commissioner of Insurance

Ralph Hudgens
*Commissioner of Insurance
Safety Fire Commissioner
Industrial Loan Commissioner*

NEWS RELEASE

*James "Sloppy" Floyd Building
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Suite
704 West Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334*

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Contact: Glenn Allen
Phone: 404-463-0729

HUDGENS URGES CAUTION WHEN BURNING LEAVES

Atlanta -- With extreme drought conditions in much of Georgia this year, Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens is advising Georgians to use caution when clearing and burning leaves.

"I recommend that citizens contact the Georgia Forestry Commission, or their local fire department, before burning anything," Hudgens said. "Many counties and municipalities may have prohibitions against outdoor burning, or at least require a permit."

Commissioner Hudgens offers the following tips when clearing or raking leaves:

- Remove 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 the lawn and refuse bags away from your home.
- Never discard cigarettes near leaves and other dry vegetation.
- Keep a water hose nearby to put out any stray flames or sparks.

This year, 5,951 brush and grass fires have been reported, compared to 6,986 in 2015. For more information about fire safety and how to prevent fires, please call our Fire Safety Education Division at 404-656-2070. The Georgia Forestry can be reached online at www.gfc.state.ga.us/