

*State of Idaho*  
**DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **National Arson Awareness Week**

BOISE ID (May 5, 2016) – Wildfire officials have announced that southern Idaho could see above normal fire activity this summer. May 1-7 is National Arson Awareness Week, focusing on Wildfire Arson. With over 50 million acres of managed land, Idaho is no stranger to this crime. Approximately 23% of wildfires are arson caused, costing hundreds of millions of dollars in lost property, resources, and community revenue.

“Wildfires have steadily increased in size over the years and the cost has dramatically skyrocketed,” says Idaho State Fire Marshal Knute Sandahl. “Last year’s wildfires cost \$2.1 billion nationally.”

Not every wildfire is caused by Mother Nature. A vast majority are human caused due to carelessness or negligence. Understanding what motivates arsonists to commit this crime can help prevent wildfire arson. The most common motives are:

- Crime concealment
- Excitement
- Extremism
- Profit
- Revenge
- Vandalism

In Idaho, wildland arson is Third Degree Arson (Idaho Code § 18-804) and can result in penalties of up to ten years in prison and up to \$50,000. The penalties are much higher if buildings are burned or someone is injured.

The Idaho State Fire Marshal’s Office is partnering with the Idaho Department of Lands, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service to lend a hand in investigating wildland fires. Members of the Fire Marshal’s staff have received training and have been certified in wildland fire investigation.

**About the Department of Insurance**

The Idaho Department of Insurance has been regulating the business of insurance in Idaho since 1901. The mission of the Department is to equitably, effectively and efficiently administer the Idaho Insurance Code and the International Fire Code. For more information, visit [www.doi.idaho.gov](http://www.doi.idaho.gov).

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