

Grassfire Definitions

Grassfire is a fire which burns through grass or other low vegetation and can spread rapidly, especially in dry or windy conditions.

Ignition sources include heat, sparks or flame from equipment, vehicles, tools, smoking materials or other work that could start a fire. (CCOHS, *Fire Protection*)

Why Grassfires Are a Workplace Hazard

Grass can ignite from a hot vehicle exhaust or a spark from cutting, grinding or welding. A small fire may spread beyond the work area, threatening workers, equipment, nearby property and escape routes.

Check conditions before starting work and reassess when the wind or work changes.

Legislation

Part 25 of *Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020* applies to fire and explosion hazards.

Section 25-2 requires steps to prevent fire and a written fire safety plan. Section 25-3 addresses portable extinguishers; subsection (2) requires one within 9 m of welding or cutting. Section 25-12(3) requires suitable steps to reduce fire risk before hot work near material that may constitute a fire hazard.

Common Ignition Sources

Vehicles and equipment — hot exhausts or accumulated grass contacting heated parts.

Spark-producing work — welding, cutting, and grinding near dry vegetation.

Open flame and smoking — discarded cigarettes, matches, and unauthorized burning.

Combustible materials — dry debris and fuel stored near heat or sparks. (CCOHS, *Fire Protection*)

Where Is the Greatest Risk?

Watch closely when dry grass borders a work area, road, ditch, or equipment parking area, and during hot, dry, or windy weather.

A provincial fire ban may not cover every municipality or rural municipality; check both provincial and local restrictions before work. (SPSA, *Fire Bans*)

Effectively Control the Risk

- Park vehicles and equipment on gravel, bare soil, or other surfaces free of dry vegetation; remove grass buildup around hot parts.
- Clear combustible debris and keep fuel containers away from heat and sparks. Follow site hot work procedures and permits. (CCOHS, *Fire Protection; Hot Work*)
- Move spark-producing work away from grass when possible. If work must proceed, control sparks, wet down the area where appropriate, and have suitable fire equipment available.

- Use the required fire watch during and after hot work. Check nearby grass and debris for smoke or smouldering before leaving. (CCOHS, *Hot Work*)
- Keep extinguishers accessible and in working order.
- Know the water supply, site location, alarm method, and escape route.



Emergency Situations

If a grassfire starts, stop work, warn others and move to safety. Call 911 promptly with the exact location, access route and any people or site hazards at risk.

Follow the fire safety plan and keep access clear for responders. Only a trained worker should use a suitable extinguisher on a small, contained fire with a clear escape route. (CCOHS, *Fire Extinguishers – Portable*)

Leave immediately if the fire spreads.

Before Starting Work, Ask:

- Is there a current fire ban or high fire danger where we are working?
- What equipment or task could produce heat, sparks, or flame?
- Where are the extinguisher, exit route, and crew meeting point?
- Who will call 911, and what exact location will they give?

Key Reminder

DRY GRASS AND A SPARK CAN BECOME A FAST-MOVING FIRE.

Stop or change the task when fire controls cannot be maintained. If smoke or fire approaches, leave early and follow the site emergency plan.

Discussion Questions

Where is dry grass closest to today's work?

Which task presents the greatest ignition risk?

How will we warn and account for everyone if a fire starts?

Sources

[Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. Fire Bans.](#)

[CCOHS. Welding – Hot Work.](#)

[CCOHS. Fire Protection.](#)

[CCOHS. Fire Extinguishers – Portable.](#)