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Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Department of Forests and Park Services

**FOREST FIRE RULES
OF BHUTAN**

2012

Shumy

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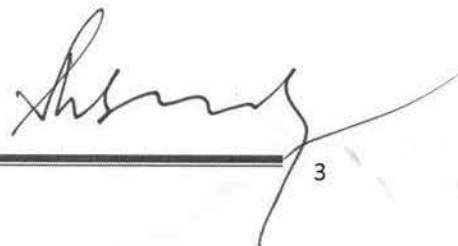
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Abbreviation

BPC	: Bhutan Power Corporation
CFO	: Chief Forestry Officer
DFO	: Divisional Forest Officer
DGM	: Department of Geology and Mines
DGPC	: Druk Green Power Corporation
DoFPS	: Department of Forests and Park Services
DoR	: Department of Roads
DzFO	: Dzongkhag Forestry Officer
DzFS	: Dzongkhag Forestry Sector
GFEO	: Geog Forest Extension Officer
NEC	: National Environment Commission
NRDCL	: Natural Resources Development Corporation Limited
Nu.	: Ngultrum
PM	: Park Manager/Park Management
RSTA	: Road Safety and Transport Authority
TCB	: Tourism Council of Bhutan
TD	: Territorial Division



1. Preamble

In exercise of the authority granted by Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests hereby formulates and adopts the Forest Fire Rules, 2012 to facilitate effective implementation of section 31 of Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995 on Fire Protection. This Rule shall supersede those provisions of the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules, 2006 that are inconsistent with the Amended Rules, 2012 and shall be implemented with immediate effect.

2. Extent

This Rule shall extent to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **"Armed Forces"** shall mean Royal Body Guards of Bhutan, Royal Bhutan Army and Royal Bhutan Police.
- 3.2 **"Community Forests"** shall mean any area of Government Reserved Forests designated for management by a local community in accordance with the provisions under Section 28 of Forest and Nature Conservation Rules, 2006
- 3.3 **"Control/Prescribed Burning"** shall mean control/prescribed burning is defined as deliberate setting and careful control of surface fire in forest to help prevent more destructive fire and to kill unwanted plants that compete with commercial species for plant nutrient may also be use on grass land.
- 3.4 **"Community Forest Management Group"** shall mean a group constituted in accordance with Rule 29 (1) for the management of Community Forest.
- 3.5 **"Compensation"** shall mean monetary payment made to the Royal Government of Bhutan for loss incurred by way of illegal taking, felling, damaging collection etc. of forest produce from the Government Reserved Forest without obtaining written approval/permission from the Ministry or Department.
- 3.6 **"Department"** shall mean Department of Forest and Park Services
- 3.7 **"Fair Market Value"** shall mean the equivalent to the average of the auction price of the forest produce, of the same or equivalent type and grade, over the last three auctions conducted by the department/Timber Producing Agencies. When prior auction information is not available (as for most types of forest produce), the value shall be estimated by a committee appointed by DFO/PM of the area.
- 3.8 **"Fine"** shall mean a sum of money imposed as penalty by the department for breaking provisions of the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of Bhutan, 1995 and the Rules made there under.
- 3.9 **"Government Reserved Forest"** shall mean all forest in Bhutan except areas that have been removed there from as described in Rules 8.1 & 9.1 of Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan, 2006.

- 3.10 **"Individual"** shall mean organization, companies, institutions and individual person.
- 3.11 **"Ministry"** shall mean Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.
- 3.12 **"Private Forests"** shall mean private forest shall mean planting and or nurturing of trees and/or other forest crops on private registered lands within the 25 acres land ceiling in accordance with the Land Act.
- 3.13 **"Rangeland"** shall mean Government Reserved Forest lands and ecosystems dominated by grasses, grass like plants, shrubs and bushes set aside for grazing purposes
- 3.14 **"Tsamdro"** shall mean Government Reserved Forest lands registered as grazing land in the name of individual, community or institutions.
- 3.15 **"Volunteers"** shall mean a group of individuals registered as Forest Fire Volunteers with the Department of Forest and Park Services to provide support in fire prevention programmes.

4 Functions

4.1 ***Ministry of Agriculture and Forest shall have the following functions:***

Laying down the policies, programs, regulations and guidelines in accordance with the provisions of Forest and Nature Conservation Act pertaining to fire protection.

- a) Securing adequate fire prevention and suppression budget.
- b) Arranging coordination meetings amongst ministries pertaining to forest fires.
- c) Prescribing fines and penalties on forest fire and related crimes.
- d) Arrangement for fires originating from across the international boundary

4.2 ***Department of Forest and Park Services shall have the following functions:***

- a) Deployment of adequate forest personnel for forest fire suppression.
- b) Promotion of forest fire volunteers
- c) Establishing strong linkages between Armed Forces
- d) Creation of mass awareness through medias
- e) Sensitizing general public on enforcement of Forest Fire Rules.
- f) Straightening of Forest Fire Management Section.
- g) Prepare fuel load reduction strategy for fire hazard zones.
- h) Prepare forest fire management strategy.
- i) Mapping of fire hazard zones.
- j) Procurement of adequate firefighting equipment and equitable distribution to field offices.
- k) Proper maintenance of Forest fire vehicles
- l) Printing and distribution of permit books.
- m) Ensuring toll free telephone lines are installed and in working conditions throughout the country.

4.3 Territorial Division/Park Services shall have the following functions:

- a) Regular enforcement of forest fire rules. Mobilization of forest personnel for fire suppression.
- b) Mobilization of Armed personnel for fire suppression.
- c) Ensure strict implementation of forest fire management strategy.
- d) Proper maintenance of firefighting equipment and vehicles.
- e) Carry out salvage operation of the burnt areas through NRDCL.

4.4 Dzongkhag Forestry Sector shall have the following functions:

- a) Creating awareness amongst general public on regular basis.
- b) Coordination and mobilization of general public for forest fire suppression.
- c) Carry out assessment of the area burnt and submit detail report to the Territorial Forest Division
- d) Carry out plantation in the burnt areas through involvement of local community.
- e) Maintenance of adequate seedlings in the nursery.

4.5 Local Government and Thromdey shall have the following functions:

- a) The concern Geog/Thromdey shall support the implementation of all the activity stated in the rule and encourage community involvement in fighting forest fire.
- b) The concern Geog/Thromdey shall identify the community involved for replanting the burnt areas and the community shall maintain the plantation until the area is well established.
- c) Carry out agriculture debris burning in the middle of the field following the guidelines and must inform the nearest forest office.
- d) Establish fire breaks/fire-line around the monuments, plantation and around the orchard before the onset of fire season.
- e) Community must ensure to watch the surrounding areas such as Community Forest (CF), plantation and orchard during the dry season.
- f) Provide necessary support to local forest office to carry out plantation in the burnt areas through involvement volunteers and students.

4.5 Schools/Institutions shall have the following functions:

- a) The concern school authority adjoining GRF shall construct fire-line around the school periphery before the onset of fire season with technical support from the Department.
- b) Coordinate prevention program involving Nature Club together with Department to disseminate fire prevention message in the school.
- c) Initiate and support Department in plantation program (post fire plantation program).
- d) If the fire outbreak is close to or nearby school, senior students shall be deployed to help in fire suppression voluntarily.
- e) In case of fire outbreak from or within school compound school authority shall help to identify the culprit.

5. Requirements and the Responsibilities of Individuals

5.1 Requirement for burning of agricultural debris

- a) Any person wishing to burn down agricultural debris shall obtain valid permit from the concerned Geog Administration in rural areas and from Thromdey Authority in urban areas.
- b) The permit shall be issued depending on prevailing weather condition.
The permit shall specify how and when fire can be used for burning agricultural debris.
- c) The permit holder shall be fully responsible to monitor the fire until the fire within the agricultural field is completely extinguished.

5.2 Requirement for power lines and substations

The concerned agencies are required to maintain adequate measures such as:

- a) Construct adequate fire lines around substations and other installations.
- b) Regular maintenance of transmission corridors.
- c) Removal of overhanging branches over the transmission lines.
- d) Up-gradation of power lines

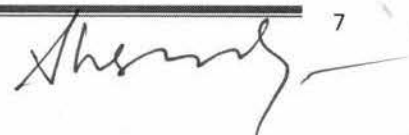
5.3 Requirement for Road related activities

The Department of Road, Project, Organization, Company and Individuals are required to maintain adequate measures such as:

- a) Construct adequate fire lines around labor camps and fire prone areas within the right of way
- b) Ensure bitumen is heated in areas where there is no risk of transmitting fire to the nearby forest areas.
- c) Ensure fires used for heating pack lunch and bonfires along motorable roads do not escape to the nearby forest areas.
- d) Ensure that no fires are left unattended along motorable roads and do not escape to the nearby forest areas.
- e) In order to ignite engines of machineries in winter months, the fuel tanks are heated with fire, which might escape into forest. Therefore the concerned Authority, Company, Individual shall ensure that the fire does not escape.
- f) Construct proper incense burning structure (Sangku) in strategic location along motorable roads.
- g) The site engineers, supervisors, individuals are responsible for monitoring such activities along motorable roads

5.3 Requirement for Campfires and Bonfires

- a) Campfire and bonfire shall be allowed only in designated recreational areas specified by the Department of Forests and Park Services, and Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB).
- b) Campfire and bonfire shall be allowed only upon obtaining permit from the Department of Forests and Park Services or Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB).

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- c) Campfire and bonfire shall not be left unattended and shall be completely extinguished before the camp is vacated.

5.4 Requirement for Logging, Charcoal, Woodchip, Quarrying, Mining and lime Manufacturing

The concerned Agencies shall take adequate precautionary measures such as:

- a) Debris and inflammable vegetation in and around work place and laborer camps must be cleared.
- b) The fire required for heating and warming packed foods shall not be left unattended and shall be completely extinguished if not required.
- c) In case of rural or urban or fallen or standing dead trees, the permit holder shall not leave fire unattended and if not required fire must be extinguished.

5.5 Requirement for Ash disposal

- a) The individual requiring ash disposal shall ensure that the ash is not hot enough to ignite fire after disposal and escapes to nearby forest.
- b) The ash holding enough heat to ignite fire should be disposed in a safe place.

6. Fire for forest management

In order to manage forests requiring fire, the Department shall develop guidelines to carry out control fire for management purposes.

The guidelines shall include:

- a) Fire for high altitude rangeland management
- b) Fire for lowland registered Tsamdroos
- c) Fire for community forest management
- d) Fire for private forest management
- e) Fire for fuel reduction of fire prone forest types
- f) Fire for improvement of forest crops

7. Children below age of 18 causing fire

Forest fire caused by children under the age of 18 shall be liable for penalty as follows:

- a) If fire escapes from school campus the fine and penalties shall be liable to the individuals who set the fire intentionally or accidentally. The individual shall be liable for the cost of fire suppression in addition to commercial royalty calculated based on girth classes of the trees damaged.
- b) If fire is lit by a child below age of 18; the parent is fully responsible and shall be liable for the cost of fire suppression in addition to commercial royalty calculated based on girth classes of the trees damaged.

8. Miscellaneous

- a) Any person from the nearby community who fails to come for forest fire suppression, the Geog Administration/Thromdey shall levy fine and penalties as decided by Geog Tshogchung /Thromdey Authority
- b) Any person, organization, company, agency not adhering to the above rules shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable for fine and penalties.

9. Causes of forest fires, Fines and Penalties

Sl/No.	Causes	Fines	Compensation	Suppression cost
1	If fires escapes from burning of Agricultural Debris (permit shall be issued from concern Tshogpa or nearest forest office) (with permit)	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
2	If fires escapes from burning of Agricultural Debris (without permit)	Nu. 50,000	Fair market value of the timbers on volume basis	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
3	Burning agricultural debris beyond the prescribed time (with valid permit)	Nu.500 per occasion		
4	Burning agricultural debris beyond the prescribed time (without valid permit)	Nu. 1000 per occasion		
5	If fire escapes due to defective power lines and electrical short circuits	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
6	Not clearing of power line corridors	Nu.10 per kilometer		
7	Not clearing of bushes and grasses around the sub stations	Nu. 500 per sub station		
8	If fire escapes from Road and related activities	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved

9	Not clearing adequate fire line around the laborer camps	Nu.500 per camp		
10	Any laborer found lighting fire on the roadside beyond the prescribed time.	Nu.50 per occasion		
11	If fires escape due to heating fuel tank of an engines for ignition	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
12	If fires escape from Campfire and Bonfire (With valid permit)	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
13	If fires escapes from Campfire and Bonfire (Without valid permit)	Nu. 50,000	Fair market value of the timbers on volume basis	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
14	Campfire and Bonfire (Without valid permit)	Nu.1000 per occasion		
15	If fire escapes from Logging, Charcoals, Woodchips, quarrying, mining and lime manufacturing. (With valid permit for operation)	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
16	If fire escapes from Logging, Charcoals, Woodchips, quarrying, mining and lime manufacturing. (Without valid permit for operation)	Nu. 50,000	Fair market value of the timbers on volume basis	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved

17	Arson and Related Crimes in GRF land			
	a) Any person who willfully and maliciously set fire to the forest	Nu. 100,000	Fair market value of the timbers on volume basis	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
	b) Any person who attempts to set fire with the intention to destroy forest	Nu. 50,000		
	c) Any person setting fire in the forest with the intention to improve growth of grass including other non wood forest product, without approved management plan shall be treated as arson	Nu. 100,000	Fair market value of the timbers on volume basis	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
18	If fire escapes from the ash disposal site	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved
19	If fire escapes from the cattle shed or migratory routes	Nu. 10,000	Commercial rate of royalty based on Species and girth classes for the damages	Actual cost involved based on total manpower and vehicles involved

10. Annexure

10.1 Firsthand Information

Date:

Division:

Dzongkhag:

Geog:

Village:

Locality:

Cause of fire:

Start date & time:

Suppression time:

Description:

Forest type:

Possible risks use ☒ ☐ ☒

1. Human settlement ☐

2. Lhakhangs /Monasteries ☐

3. Schools and other institutions ☐

Note:

- *First hand information to be conveyed by CFO/PM to DG and/or Forest Fire Management Section*
- *Forest fire assessment to be done by TFD/PM and DzFS*
- *Detail report to be sent by CFO/PM and DzFS after assessment*
- *Contact numbers: 324270 (o) 17606955 (m)*

Submitted by,

CFO/PM

10.2 Detail Forest Fire Report

Date:

Case No:

Division:

Dzongkhag:

Geog:

Village:

Locality:

Start date & time:

Fighting (start time):

Date & time last suppression:

Description of Forest type:

Forest burnt:

GRF land:.....acres

Plantation:.....acres

Private Forests:.....acres

Community forests:.....acres

Others:.....acres

Total area burnt:.....acres

GPS reading (latitude and longitude): E:N:..... or GPS survey data of burnt area shall be sent to staff of Forest Fire Management Section.

Cause of fire:

Crop Damage	Dia class	Total	Rate (Nu.)	Estimated amount
Trees	8-9'	.....	.....	.....
	7-8'	.....	.....	.....
	6-7'	.....	.....	.....
	5-6'	.....	.....	.....
	4-3'	.....	.....	.....
Poles	3-2'	.....	.....	.....
	2-1'	.....	.....	.....
	1-0-	.....	.....	.....
Small Poles	0.6" below	.....	.....	.....
Saplings		.....	.....	.....
Seedlings		.....	.....	.....
Any other		.....	.....	.....

Total estimated value of damaged forest crops

Organization involved in Forest Fire and their numbers

Forest Officials =
RBA =
RBP =
RBG =

Public =
Labour =
Others =

Total person involved in fire fighting:

Details of Offender:

Name and address

.....

Age Sex Occupation of offenders

Comments and suggestion on the burnt area

.....
.....
.....

Assessment done by 1) GFEO

2) Beat Officer/Park Ranger

Report forwarded to DFO/PM

Reference:

Dated:

Penalty details

Fine Suppression Cost Nu.

Technical advice on the burnt area:

.....
.....
.....

DFO/PM
Territorial Forest Division

