



Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Situational Awareness Statement # 25

Subject: Statewide Wildfire Operations

Date/Time: 11/22/24 1500

Blue/italic text denotes updates since the previous SAS

Incident or Event Overview		
Situation		
<p>Since October 27, daily coordination calls have occurred two times daily with EOPSS, MEMA, DFS, DCR Forestry, and MANG, to ensure coordination as a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group. Further, a daily call with impacted area fire officials, statewide fire mobilization, and the Fire Chiefs of Massachusetts has been held since November 2 to address unmet needs, share information, and ensure a strategic approach to wildfire response statewide.</p> <p>Fire activity continues across the Commonwealth as severe drought conditions continue. As of 1700 on 11/21, there were <i>0</i> new fires that developed in the prior 24 hours. 21 active fires are currently receiving state support from DCR, DFS, or MEMA. Recent fire activity is summarized below:</p>		
Time Frame	Number of Fires	Acres Burnt:
YTD:	1226	<i>4,202</i>
October:	213	841
November:	<i>433</i>	<i>2,813</i>
Last 24 Hours:	<i>0</i>	<i>0 (estimate)</i>
<p>Data provided by DCR Forest Fire Control & Forestry</p> <p><i>The Butternut Fire in Great Barrington continued to burn overnight, but was held in check by rainfall, spreading to a total of 1,388 acres. Widespread precipitation fell across Massachusetts yesterday and there were no new fires reported. Forecast calls for additional precipitation across the state again on Friday. The precipitation will mean a couple days without new fires starting. Once the precipitation stops and surface fuels dry out again the chances for new starts will again be present. The existing deep burning fires will continue to hold heat and will not be extinguished by this event. Numerous communities across the state have instituted burn bans at the local level. Containment percentages and risk of spreading are unchanged from the last report. Containment and spread for risk will be re-evaluated and updated on future reports.</i></p> <p>Numerous communities across the state have instituted burn bans at the local level. Many local fire departments continue to be dispatched for illegal burning calls.</p> <p>To help show the drought induced wildfire footprint visually, a GIS Dashboard has been developed and can be accessed at this link: Wildfires and Smoke Forecast. This dashboard will be refined as more data is incorporated. A Story Map has been built, showing drought and</p>		

wildfire progression since mid-October. A link can be found here: [Drought and Wildfire Story Map](#).

ONGOING SAFETY ALERT for ALL FIRE RESPONSE STAFF: Both live and dead trees (Snag Trees) within active fire perimeters continue to be an INCREASING RISK to fire fighters. There are daily reports of near misses and increasing concerns of snags posing safety risks to firefighters on the fire line. Please brief all personnel, insist on wearing proper PPE, including hardhats or helmets, and if in doubt avoid areas with burning dead snags. Adjust tactics to make firefighter safety the top priority objective for daily operations.

Drought Conditions Prevail

This week, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Tepper elevated the Western, Connecticut River Valley, and Southeast regions to a Level 3 - Critical Drought. A Level 3 - Critical Drought persists in the Central and Northeast regions. The Cape and Islands regions remain at a Level 0 - Normal condition. With over 3 months of unprecedented low rainfall and up to 8-11 inches of rainfall deficit, conditions are dry across much of the state. Water availability for firefighting is challenged, water supplies are starting to get affected, streams are drying, and fish and other fauna are unable to thrive. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's [drought](#) and [water conservation](#) pages.

The State Fire Marshal communicated with local fire chiefs and recommended the reporting of any drought related water rationing needs/efforts for the preservation of local water reserves for structural fire response operations, while continuing to support ongoing wildfires operations.

An increasing number of communities are now instituting burn bans at the local level. As of November 20, 193 communities have a burn ban in effect. The continued leaf drop remains the number one challenge for fire crews in maintaining perimeter control around most fires where foliage has yet to completely drop. Leaf blowers have proved highly effective in maintaining fire lines in patrol and mop-up operations.

The State Fire Marshal and FCAM continue to recommend to local fire chiefs to deny any fire-related permit requests and collaborate with local officials to prohibit any recreational fire activity. Fire chiefs have the authority to prohibit the use of open flames and other ignition sources in hazardous conditions, such as extreme drought or red-flag conditions, under Section 10.10.2 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code.

The State Fire Marshal has provided Fire Chiefs throughout the Commonwealth with guidance on implementing Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) as needed. A TFR restricts aircraft (including drones) from operating without permission in a certain area for a limited time and can be issued due to natural disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes.

https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/temporary_flight_restrictions

Weather Update:

Yesterday, a low-pressure system delivered widespread rain amounts of 1.00 to 1.50 inches. While this wasn't enough to fully extinguish all wildfire activity, it did help prevent any new fires from developing. The same system will linger over southern New England through Saturday, bringing additional periods of showers.

This afternoon and tonight, lighter southerly winds are anticipated, ranging from 9 to 18 mph. As the low-pressure system gradually shifts offshore on Saturday, winds will shift to a westerly direction and strengthen, reaching speeds of 12 to 16 mph with gusts between 30 and 35 mph. These gusty winds will continue through much of Sunday as drier weather returns to the region, accompanied by humidity levels between 45% and 55%.

Additional rainfall amounts through Sunday morning is forecast to range between 0.25 and 0.50 inches, primarily across western Massachusetts, and up to an inch across central and eastern Massachusetts. Additionally, a few wet snowflakes may mix in over the higher elevations of Worcester and Berkshire County late tonight into early Saturday morning.

Monday will bring calmer conditions with lesser wind gusts and continued dry weather which will once again help to dry out fuels. However additional opportunities for precipitation are expected later next week, especially Tuesday as a weak system crosses the region. Another storm system may develop late next week.

Hazard Impacts/Potential Impacts

- Smoke impacts on residential areas and roadways.
- Falling trees and dead snags within burned areas, alongside other risks to firefighters.
- Loss of forest stock.
- Obstruction of roadways.
- Damage to buildings and infrastructure in burn areas.
- *Ongoing drought related impacts.*

Weather Forecast Overview

Watches, Warnings or Advisories for Massachusetts

Last updated on 11/22/24 at 2:45 PM.

Currently no Watches or Warnings.

More information available at <https://alerts.weather.gov/search?area=MA>

Weather Graphics

	Wind Gust Forecast (mph)														Maximum													
	11/22 Fri		11/23 Sat		11/24 Sun		11/25 Mon		11/26 Tue		11/27 Wed		11/28 Thu															
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm		6pm												
Block Island	37	25	14	12	22	33	38	37	33	37	30	23	17	16	14	14	17	23	24	24	22	22	21	18	16	17	17	38
Boston	24	18	13	12	16	25	33	28	24	32	23	19	12	12	8	6	9	17	18	16	16	21	15	10	10	14	12	23
Brockton	20	20	9	9	15	25	31	23	21	32	22	14	12	13	8	7	10	18	17	15	15	20	14	10	10	14	12	32
Gloucester	29	20	9	15	20	25	36	31	29	32	26	23	18	13	9	9	12	16	20	22	22	21	18	17	15	15	14	36
Greenfield	22	22	12	9	14	25	28	22	21	28	18	10	7	9	6	6	8	18	14	14	13	17	12	8	7	10	8	28
Hartford	23	24	12	10	16	33	31	28	22	35	22	12	8	10	8	7	10	18	18	14	13	21	15	9	8	14	12	35
Hyannis	29	20	15	12	15	26	35	33	31	33	20	23	18	15	10	10	15	21	21	22	22	22	18	17	16	16	14	35
Lowell	21	18	10	8	16	29	32	23	22	35	22	13	9	12	5	3	7	16	18	13	14	21	14	8	9	13	9	35
Nantucket	29	17	14	14	13	25	37	36	33	35	30	24	20	16	13	12	15	21	21	23	22	22	21	18	16	17	15	37
New Bedford	29	22	10	10	16	25	32	26	25	32	23	18	15	14	9	9	12	20	18	17	18	20	16	14	13	15	12	32
Newport	33	24	12	12	20	30	33	30	29	33	25	18	14	14	10	14	20	18	18	18	18	20	18	14	13	14	14	33
Providence	22	20	9	9	15	25	30	22	22	31	21	13	10	13	8	6	9	17	16	13	14	18	14	9	9	13	12	31
Provincetown	32	20	15	15	20	25	39	39	35	35	31	28	22	15	10	12	16	20	22	25	25	23	22	21	18	16	17	39
Springfield	24	24	14	12	16	31	31	28	22	33	22	13	9	10	8	8	10	18	18	15	13	21	15	9	8	14	12	23
Vineyard Haven	31	21	10	12	17	30	35	33	31	35	28	22	17	15	12	10	15	21	20	21	21	22	18	16	14	16	14	35
Worcester	24	22	15	10	17	31	33	29	29	36	24	16	12	14	8	7	12	20	20	17	17	23	16	10	10	15	12	36



Accumulated Rainfall Forecast

Valid 8AM Friday - 8AM Sunday

Weather Forecast Office
Boston/Norton, MA
Issued Nov 22, 2024 4:11 AM EST

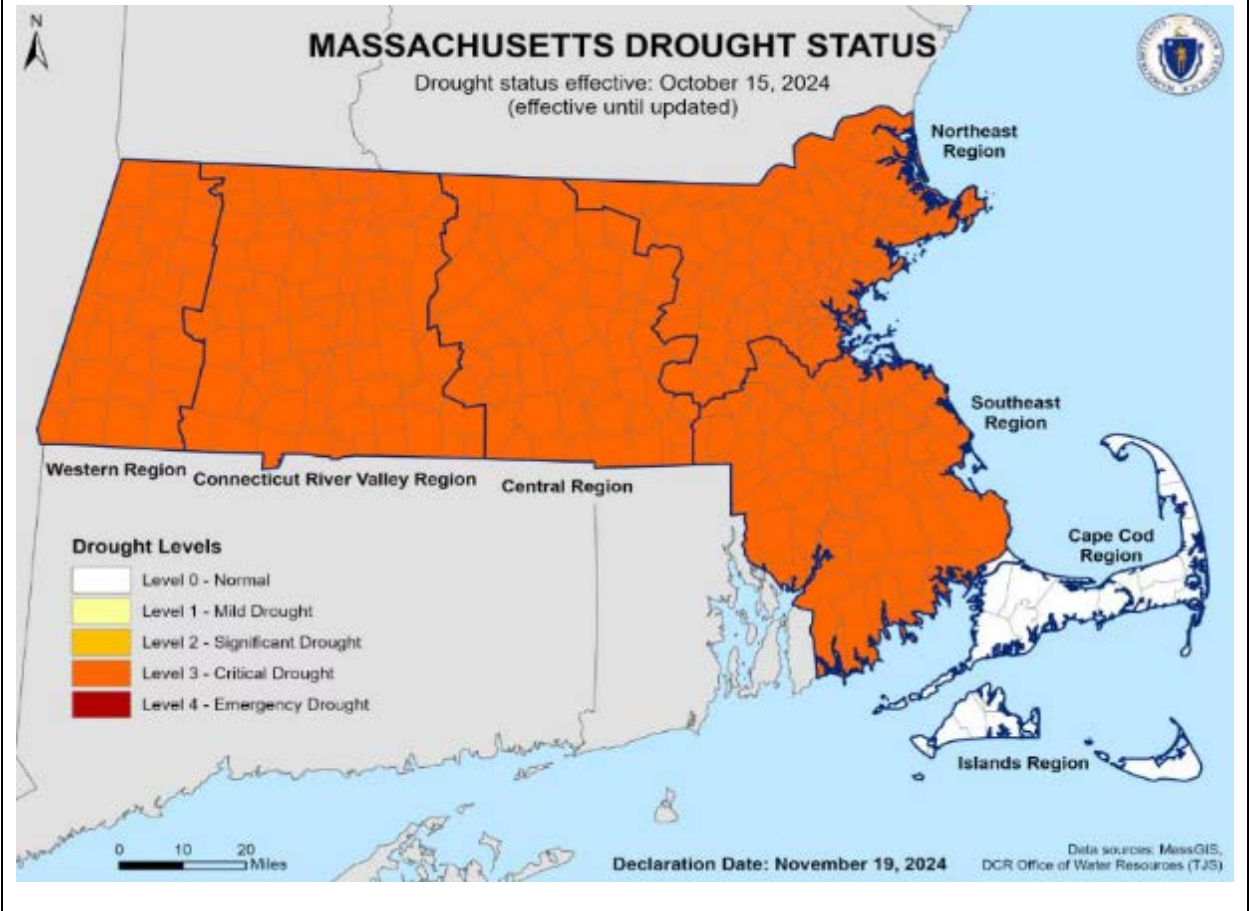


Source: Sci. Miss. GeoEye, Barister, Geographic, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

[f](#) [t](#) [v](#) NWS Boston/Norton

weather.gov/bos

Areas	High Temperatures						
Boston	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	51	46	48	50	52	44	43
Worcester	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	47	44	45	50	51	41	39
Lawrence	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	51	45	47	49	52	42	40
Fitchburg	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	48	43	44	49	50	40	37
North Adams	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	41	38	39	46	44	35	34
Springfield	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	47	45	46	52	52	43	39
Chatham	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	51	48	50	52	53	46	46
Plymouth	NOV 22	NOV 23	NOV 24	NOV 25	NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28
	52	47	49	51	55	45	44



Minimum RH Sunday

Weather Forecast Office
Boston/Norton, MA



Valid Sun 3:00AM through Sun 9:00PM EST

Issued Nov 22, 2024 5:18 AM EST

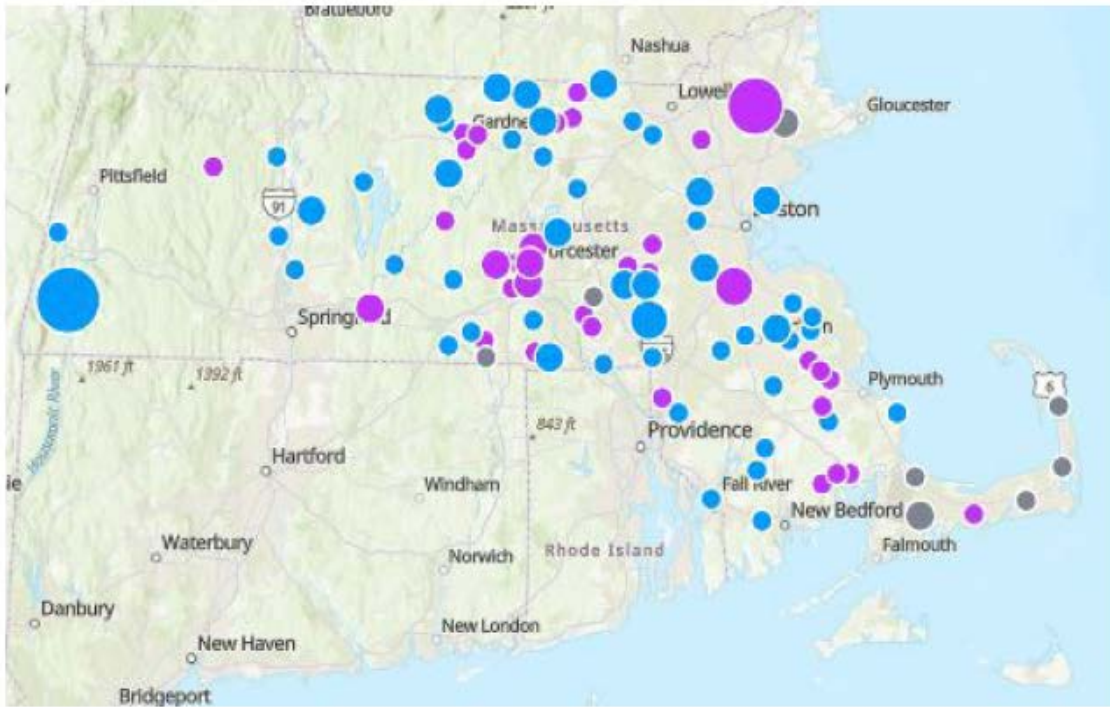


Source: Sea, Moon, GeoEye, Earthstar, Geographic, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

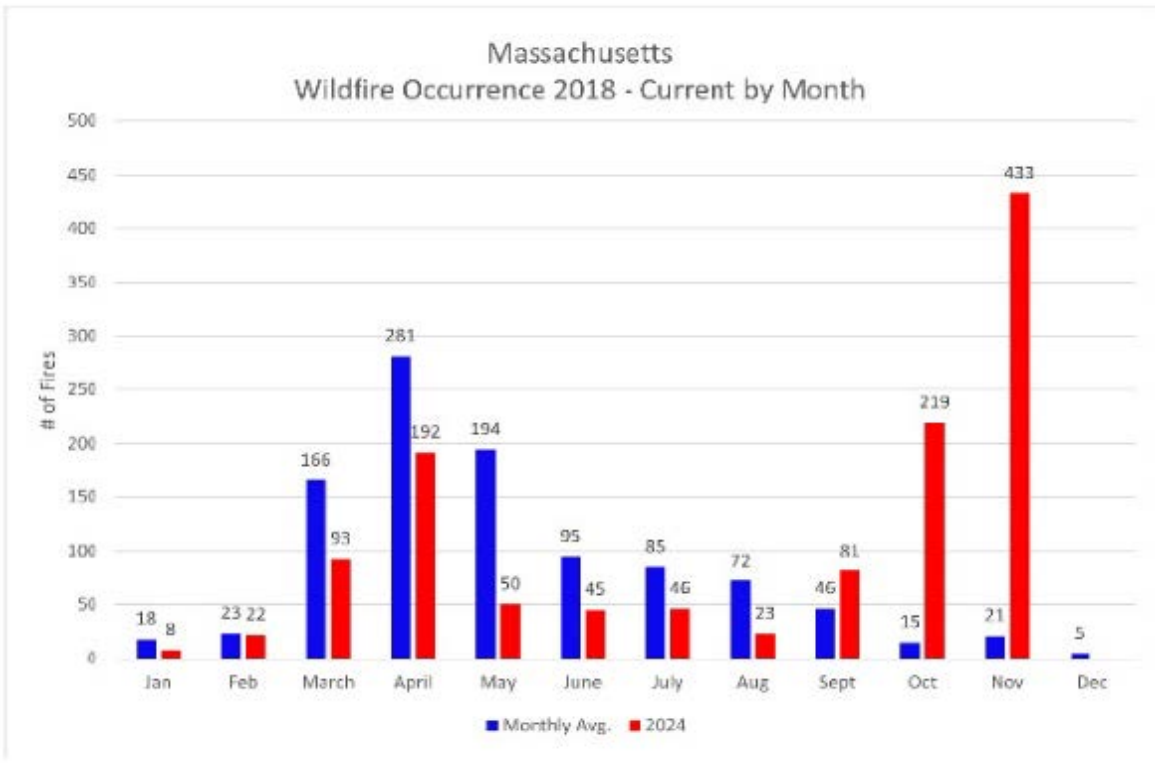
NWS Boston/Norton

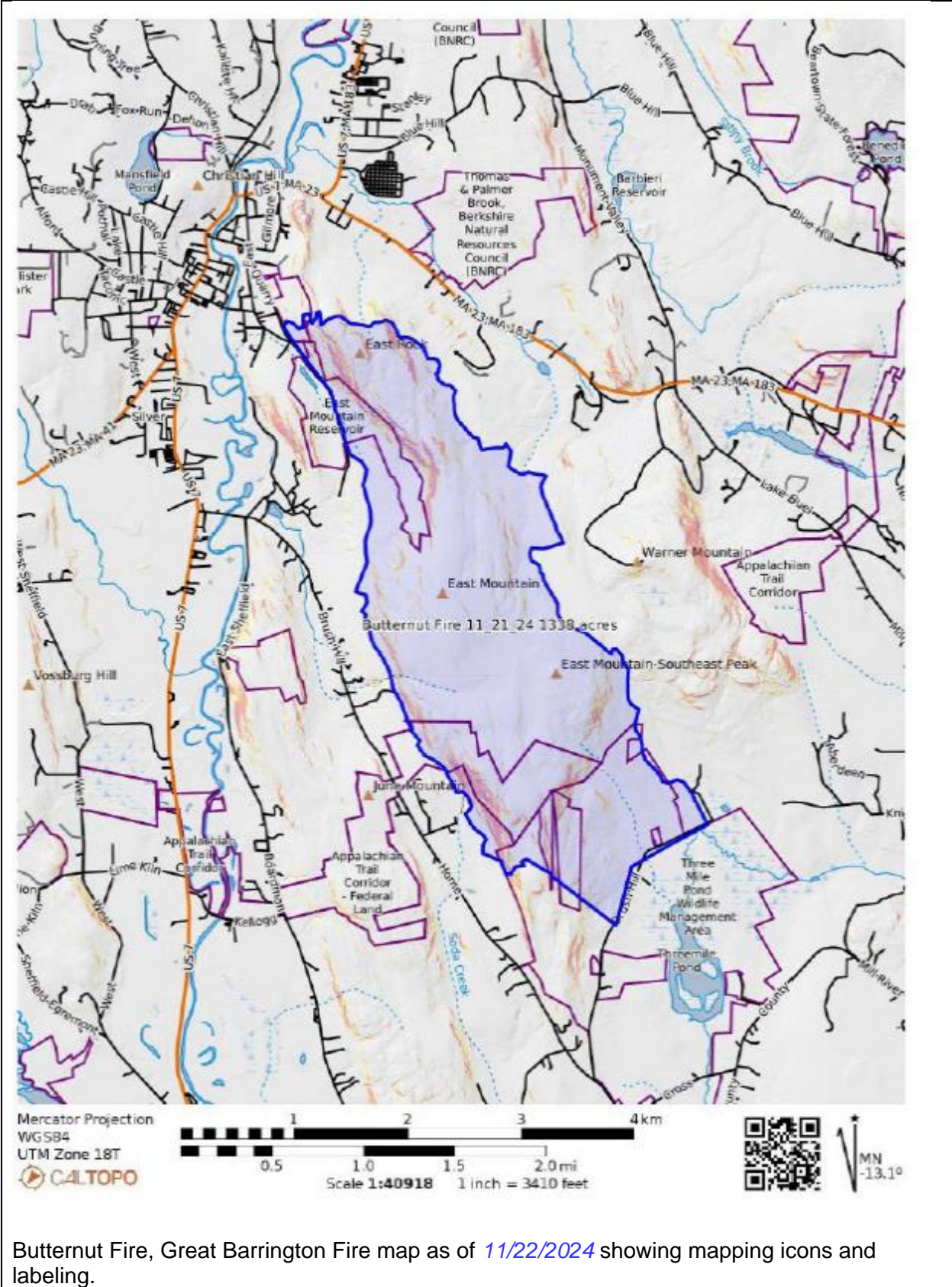
weather.gov/bos

Wildfire Activity Graphics



7 Day Fire Locations





Butternut Fire, Great Barrington Fire map as of 11/22/2024 showing mapping icons and labeling.

MEMA Region Updates		
MEMA East	Significant Issues	Local coordinators are in contact with local public safety officials experiencing large wildfires and are prepared to support needs as they arise.
	Unmet Needs	None at this time.
MEMA West	Significant Issues	<p>Local coordinators are in contact with local public safety officials experiencing large wildfires and are prepared to support needs as they arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Coordinators have scaled back operations Friday and will reassess and resume operations Saturday through Monday.</i> • <i>MEOC -1 has been deployed as a Unified Command Post at the Butternut Fire in Great Barrington.</i> • <i>MEMA has deployed 52 cache radios and is supporting command post (CP) operations at the Great Barrington Fairgrounds.</i>
	Unmet Needs	None at this time.

Preparedness and Response Actions	
Firefighting	<p>Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCR fire staff are assisting local fire departments with response, tactical, and strategic planning, and monitoring all active incidents. • DCR fire towers on full alert and successfully detecting new fires, resulting in faster dispatching to fires quickly, resulting in much quicker dispatching to some fires. • DCR has issued a temporary ban on all open flame and charcoal fires at Massachusetts state parks. The ban is effective immediately and will continue until further notice. <p>Working on the following wildfires as of <i>11/22/24 at 1500:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butternut: Great Barrington, MA. <i>A local state of emergency was declared by Great Barrington effective November 18. 1,388 acres at 0% containment. Fire burned actively overnight with backing fire and heavy smoldering. The fire is burning in steep and rugged terrain. Access is difficult.</i> • Thomas Rd.: North Andover, MA, Boxford State Forest. 517 acres at 60% containment. <i>A local state of emergency was declared by North Andover effective November 20. The fire is being held mostly on hard packed roads. No structures threatened at this time. State Forest and trail closures in effect. No immediate residential values at risk.</i> • Houghtons Path: Milton, Blue Hills State Reservation. 41 acres 70% containment. <i>Weakened trees and snags in burned area.</i> • Mt. Gilead: Lynn. Lynn Woods Reservation. Currently at 440 Acres, 50% Contained. <i>Most areas along the perimeter looking strong.</i> • Crag Mountain South: Northfield, MA. 5 acres, 85% containment. Local resources continue to patrol and monitor.

- **Old Forest Rd:** North Andover, MA. Located in Boxford State Forest. Estimated at 134 acres, 60% contained. *A local state of emergency was declared by North Andover effective November 20.*
- **Cain Hill:** Salem/Lynn, MA. 140+ acres and 60% containment.
- **Middleton Pond:** Middleton and North Reading. A local state of emergency was declared by Middleton effective November 21st. 242 acres and 60% containment. *Continued patrol of perimeter.*
- **Pappas:** Canton, MA. 33 acres and 90% containment. *No new activity.*
- **Traders Way:** Salem, MA. 15 Acres at 85% containment. No new activity. Local FD monitoring.
- **Bradway:** Monson, MA. Located on Bradway Road. 44 acres, 90% contained. No new information.
- **Castle Rock:** Saugus, MA, Breakheart State Reservation. 24 acres, 60% contained. *Mop up continues.*
- **Fitzgerald:** Northampton, MA. 55 acres, 85% contained. Resources continue to patrol and monitor.
- **Moose Meadow:** Montgomery, MA. 60 acres and 80% contained. Mop-up, monitor, and patrol.
- **FD05111:** Georgetown, MA., Georgetown Rowley State Forest. Currently 10 Acres, estimated 75% containment. Fire is in Patrol and Monitor status.
- **Fern:** Saugus, MA., Breakheart Reservation. 20 acres at 70% containment.
- **Braintree Brush:** Braintree, MA. Currently 40 acres and 80% contained.
- **Pine Hill:** Foxborough, MA. Currently 10 acres and 90% contained. Patrol and monitoring are ongoing.
- **Depot:** Whately, MA. Estimated 2 acres and 85% contained. Local and DCR Fire continue to patrol and monitor.
- **Rocky Pond:** Boylston, MA: 2 acres and 70% contained. In patrol and mop-up. Snags and weakened trees within perimeter.
- **Franklin Well #8:** Franklin. 12 acres at 80% containment. Smoldering and creeping fire behavior. In patrol and mop-up status.

Department of Fire Services (DFS)

- The State Fire Marshal is in contact with fire chiefs across the state to ensure needs are met and coordination with resources is sufficient.
- DFS has deployed drones, ISUs, UTV/ATVs, rehab units, and staff to support incident commanders, fireground personnel, and impacted communities

Statewide Fire/EMS Mobilization:

Since 10/25, there have been a total of 23 fire mobilization requests for Forestry Task Forces in support of wildfire operations:

- 10/25 Wilmington
 - Forestry Task Force 14A
- 10/26 Wilmington
 - Forestry Task Forces 7C, 14B
- 10/27 Salem

- Forestry Task Force 6A
- 10/28 Salem
 - Forestry Task Force 13A
- 10/29 Middleton
 - Forestry Task Forces 13A, 6A
- 10/29 Canton
 - Forestry Task Force 2F
- 10/29 Salem
 - Forestry Task Force 14A
- 10/30 Middleton
 - Forestry Task Force 4A, 8A
- 10/30 Salem
 - Forestry Task Force 14B
- 11/1 Monson
 - Structural Task Force 7A
 - Forestry Hand Crew 9
- 11/02 Monson
 - Forestry Task Force 12A
 - Structural Tender Task Force 9A
- 11/02 Middleton
 - Forestry Task Force 2D
- 11/3 Monson
 - Forestry Task Force 7B
- 11/4 Monson
 - Forestry Task Force 8D
- 11/6 Georgetown
 - Forestry Task Force 6B
- 11/10 North Reading
 - Forestry Task Force 14C
- 11/11 North Andover
 - Forestry Strike Team 13B
- 11/11 North Reading
 - Forestry Task Force 8B
- 11/13 North Andover
 - Tender Strike Team 14A
- 11/19 Winchendon
 - Forestry Strike Team 7B
- 11/19 Milton
 - Forestry Task Force 4A
 - Forestry Task Force 2F
- 11/19 Abington
 - Forestry Strike Team 13A
- 11/21 Great Barrington
 - Structural Task Force 10B (Pumpers Only)
 - Forestry Hand Crew 11A

Many in-district strike teams have been requested to augment local efforts outside the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan.

	<p>Massachusetts National Guard (MANG)</p> <p>MANG air ops will support DCR Forestry and local incident commanders as needed. Air crews are on duty at both Air Support Facilities (Barnes and Joint Base Cape Cod) should a need for air support occur.</p> <p>One MANG Helicopter was requested yesterday to perform water drops in support of fire suppression efforts at the Butternut Fire in Great Barrington.</p> <p><i>No new missions are planned for MANG Helicopters at this time. If new requests present themselves, MANG will be reactivated to support water drop requests.</i></p> <p>Massachusetts State Police (MSP)</p> <p>MSP continues to support wildfire response. Aerial assets are standing by today for any additional requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSP continues to deploy drones to provide aerial live feeds and thermal imaging for situational awareness. • The MSP Air Wing is available upon request to provide aerial surveillance for situational awareness and planning purposes.
<p>Health and Medical</p>	<p>Public Health Resources</p> <p>The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has compiled a range of resources designed to help residents, patients, and health professionals navigate the health risks associated with wildfire smoke. All resources are included in the PDF attached to the alert message. We encourage you to share these resources and educate residents on protective measures.</p> <p><u>Climate Fact Sheet: Wildfire Smoke</u> (available in 15 languages) – This resource explains who is at higher risk during a wildfire smoke event, including young children, older adults, individuals with respiratory conditions, and others with heightened vulnerability, and provides things people can do to stay safe such as talking with their provider about asthma medications, moving outdoor activities indoors, and having a supply of N95 masks available as needed.</p> <p><u>Climate fact sheet: wildfire smoke events mass.gov</u></p> <p><u>Climate Fact Sheet: Poor Outdoor Air Quality</u> (available in 15 languages). This resource explains who is at higher risk to poor outdoor air quality including people with asthma, lung, or heart conditions, and provides steps people can take to stay safe such as staying informed about local air quality and reducing outdoor activities on high-pollution days.</p> <p><u>Climate fact sheet: poor outdoor air quality mass.gov</u></p>

	For Public Officials and Clinicians: We ask that you remain vigilant and responsive to the needs of people who are most vulnerable within your communities. Informing residents about the availability of the resources.
Energy (power & fuel)	<p>Eversource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eversource continues to monitor the weather and brush fires across the state, working with local fire departments as needed. • All emergency management personnel can continue to utilize the dedicated public safety numbers to directly report any fires to Eversource. <p>National Grid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Grid is fully engaged with its partners regarding recent wildfires. Should any emergency management entity need to contact National Grid for any wildfire response, please utilize existing previously distributed Priority phone numbers.
Environmental Protection	<p>Department of Environmental Protection:</p> <p>Fine particle levels should average in the Good range on <i>Friday</i>.</p> <p>Open burning is prohibited.</p> <p>https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/dep/massair/web/#/pollution/map/forecast</p>

MEMA Operations	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Monday, November 4th and again on Thursday November 7th, at the request of the State Fire Marshal, MEMA conducted proactive outreach to CSX and Pan Am railroads, asking them to pause any rail grinding or other rail work that could cause sparks through at least Sunday in Massachusetts, to prevent this cause of wildfires. • The State Emergency Operations Center is currently operating at Steady State. MEMA will continue to monitor the situation. <i>No new Situational Awareness Statements (SAS) will be produced over the weekend. The next planned SAS will be distributed on Monday November 25 at 1500.</i> • Drought Mission Group meetings are occurring weekly with key agencies that support the Drought Management Plan, to coordinate drought related actions. Further, coordination calls are scheduled with municipal officials on November 22 and with water suppliers on November 26 to share the latest information on the drought conditions.

Safety Tips for Specific Threats and Hazards	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought Safety Tips https://www.mass.gov/info-details/drought-safety-tips • Power Outage Safety Tips https://www.mass.gov/info-details/power-outage-safety-tips • Wildfire Safety Tips https://www.ready.gov/wildfires • Water Conservation Tips www.mass.gov/conservemawater

Stay Informed

For additional information and updated forecasts, see <https://www.weather.gov/box/> (NWS Boston/Norton), and <https://www.weather.gov/aly/> (NWS Albany).

Use MEMA's real-time power outage map to stay informed about current power outages in your community/county, and across the state, including information from utility providers <http://mema.mapsonline.net/public.html>

Online Resources

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency: www.mass.gov/mema

MEMA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsEMA>

MEMA on X: <https://x.com/MassEMA>

Federal Emergency Management Agency: <https://www.fema.gov/>

National Weather Service Boston/Norton: <https://www.weather.gov/box/>

National Weather Service Albany NY: <https://www.weather.gov/aly/>

NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center: <https://www.spc.noaa.gov/>

Northeast River Forecast Center: <https://www.weather.gov/nerfc/>

National Hurricane Center: <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Mass 211: <https://mass211.org/>

National Interagency Fire Center: [Welcome to the Nation's Logistical Support Center | National Interagency Fire Center](#)

Eastern Area Coordination Center: [Home | Eastern Area Coordination Center \(EACC\)](#)

Report developed by Scott Langlands, All-Hazards Planner

24/7 MEMA Dispatch Phone # (508) 820-2000