



Durkee, Cow Valley, and Bonita Fires Update for Tuesday, July 23, 2024

541-208-4371, staffed 7AM to 7PM PDT

2024.durkee@firenet.gov

DURKEE FIRE: Start date: July 17, 2024 | Location: 5 miles southwest of Durkee, OR | Personnel: 635 | OSFM Task Forces: 4 | Fire size: 239,255 acres | Cause: Lightning | Containment: 0%

COW VALLEY FIRE: Start date: July 11, 2024 | Location: 9 miles east of Ironside, OR | Personnel: 0 | Fire size: 133,490 acres | Cause: Human caused | Containment: 78%

BONITA FIRE: Start date: July 11, 2024 | Location: 9 miles south east of Ironside, OR | Personnel: 0 | Fire size: 2,727 acres | Cause: Human caused | Containment: 90%

Firefighters are working night and day to extinguish the Durkee Fire and six new lightning starts on the east side of Interstate 84 (I-84). The Durkee, Cow Valley, and Bonita Road Fires are now being managed under Unified Command by NW Team 6 and the Oregon State Fire Marshall Green Team. The Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMTs) will work in unison to protect structures, defend critical infrastructure, and coordinate fire suppression efforts.

The Bureau of Land Management Vale District led the initial attack response to yesterday's lightning starts east of I-84, with Durkee firefighting resources. Baker County Sheriff's Office issue additional evacuation orders in association with the largest new fire — the Thompson Fire, which started near Thompson Creek and was estimated to be 10,000 acres this morning.

The Durkee Fire is now 239,255 acres based on an infrared (IR) flight at 1:11am on July 23. The fire has grown 65,496 acres since an IR flight measured it to be 173,759 acres at 7:25pm on July 21. This growth was due to record setting high temperatures, extremely and unseasonably dry fuels, and erratic high winds. The majority of fire growth occurred on the eastern edge.

Low visibility caused by smoke delayed aerial operations temporarily yesterday morning, but clearer skies in the afternoon allowed consecutive water and fire-retardant drops during initial attack and other fire suppression efforts.

The Durkee Fire was held in place on the northern flank, staying southwest of Durkee, Oregon, and I-84. The objective is to hold the fire south of Burnt River. The eastern flank of the fire continues to be active, creating large plumes of smoke. It has not crossed I-84. Firefighters focused on structure protection in the Durbin Creek area. They are also working to reduce fuels on the fireline between Lockett Road and Benson Road with fire where necessary. On the western flank, crews completed strategic burning operations west of Bridgeport and worked on structure protection in the community. Fire activity has decreased on the southern flank, north of the communities on Highway 26. Resources continue to patrol and monitor the area for smoke.



According to the National Incident Management Situation Report, the Durkee Fire is the number one priority fire in the nation. National resources are limited due to commitments on other large fires and emerging incidents. A Type 3 team has been ordered to work on the new fire starts east of I-84.

WEATHER AND SMOKE: Yesterday, the northwestern edge received light precipitation, temporarily moderating fire behavior. The fire remained active on all other flanks. Today will be hot and dry with strong northwest winds. Temperatures are expected to reach 106°F. Wind gusts could be up to 55 mph. For current smoke information, visit airfire.org. A Red Flag warning is in effect for Wednesday with the possibility for thunderstorms.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES:

The Malheur County Sheriff's has issued evacuations for the area around Durkee Fire. check for updates on the [Malheur County Sheriff's Office Facebook page](#).

The Baker County Sheriff's Office has issued evacuations for the area around Durkee Fire. Visit the [Baker County Sheriff's Office Facebook page](#) for more information. Baker County Sheriff's Office has closed Burnt River Canyon Road to non-local, non-emergency traffic due to the Durkee Fire.

I-84 and other Highways: Please go to tripcheck.com for current road closures as the situation is dynamic and subject to change.

BURN BAN: A burn ban is currently in effect for all of Malheur County, including all BLM lands. For more information, visit <https://www.malheurco.org/category/public-notices/>.

TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTION: There is a temporary flight restriction over the Durkee Fire, please remember, if you fly we can't! If a drone or other aircraft enters the air space, all firefighting aviation equipment will be grounded.

[Cow Valley Fire Incident Website](#)
[Durkee Fire Incident Website](#)
[Durkee and Cow Valley Facebook Page](#)

