

Ash from woodstoves start small fires off Pioneer Trail

U.S. Forest Service and Lake Valley firefighters recently quickly doused two fires of less than a quarter acre each off Pioneer Trail.



Both were caused by people dumping hot ashes from a woodstove or fireplace in the woods. One was Nov. 3 and the other Nov. 16.

“The change in our weather doesn’t mean we can stop paying attention to fire prevention,” LTBMU fire prevention officer Beth Brady said in a statement. “Woodstove ashes can retain enough heat to start a fire in your home or surrounding forest for many days after you think your fire’s out.”

Officials said neither house had defensible space, and the resulting wildfires could have destroyed the home or adjacent structures. Residents can be cited for “negligently placing any material that could start a fire,” which carries a \$350 fine. They also can be held responsible for the costs of fire suppression.

State and local fire agencies recommend placing ashes in a metal container, which should not be stored in the house or garage, or on any flammable surface, such as a deck. The ashes should cool for at least four days before final disposal, and any hot spots doused with water.