
When you burn trash outdoors, the potential cost to your health, your home, your neighbors, and your environment far exceeds the price of adequate collection services. Protect yourself, your neighbors, and your wallet by knowing the rules—what you can burn and where. And remember, there are alternatives to open burning.

What does Ohio EPA consider “open burning”?

You are open burning any time you light an outdoor fire. In the past, many materials—including leaves, tree trimmings, tires, and construction debris—were routinely burned outdoors.

Why do Ohio’s laws prohibit so many kinds of open burning?

Depending upon the material being burned, open fires can release many kinds of toxic fumes. Leaves and plant materials send aloft millions of spores when they catch fire, causing many people with allergies to have difficulty breathing. The pollutants released by open burning also make it more difficult to attain, or maintain, health-based air quality standards, especially in or near the major metropolitan centers. The gases released by open burning can also harm neighboring buildings by corroding metal siding and damaging paint. Besides, open burning is not a very efficient way to get rid of wastes since

open fires do not get hot enough to burn the materials completely.

What materials can never be burned?

Some materials may not be burned anywhere in the state at any time. These are:

- materials containing rubber, grease, and asphalt or made from petroleum, such as tires, cars and auto parts, plastics, or plastic-coated wire;
- garbage—any wastes created in the process of handling, preparing, cooking, or consumption of food; and
- dead animals.

Where is Burning Illegal?

With a few exceptions, open burning is not permitted in a restricted area. Restricted areas primarily include:

- within the boundaries of any municipal corporation;
- within corporation limits and a 1,000-foot zone outside any municipal corporation having a population of 1,000 to 10,000; and
- within corporation limits and a one-mile zone outside any municipal corporation with a population of more than 10,000.

What types of open burning are permitted anywhere?

A few types of open burning are permitted everywhere, even in restricted areas. Fires must be kept to a minimum size for their intended purpose, and shall not be used for waste disposal purposes.

Within a Restricted Area

Permitted burning includes:

- cooking for human consumption (barbecues, campfires, cookouts);
- heating tar;
- welding and acetylene torches;
- smudge pots and similar occupational needs; and
- heating for warmth of outdoor workers and strikers. Use common sense: use only clean wood and restrict the size of the fire so it can be contained in a 55-gallon drum.

By notifying Ohio EPA in advance, ceremonial fires can be set for limited periods of time. Fires must be limited in size to 5 feet by 5 feet and may not burn for more than three hours.

Under certain circumstances, fires set to train firefighters, to dispose of certain ignitable or explosive materials, or to dispose of poisons such as pesticides and their containers are allowed WITH PRIOR WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM OHIO EPA. Recognized horticultural, silvicultural, range, or wildlife management practices, involving burning, also are allowed with prior written permission from Ohio EPA.

This permission may take two weeks to obtain.

Ohio EPA is represented by five district offices and nine local air agencies. See the back of the brochure for the agency to contact in your area.

Fires intended to control disease or pests may be set if the local health department, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture verifies to Ohio EPA that open burning is the only appropriate control method.

Outside a Restricted Area

Outside a restricted area, the following types of wastes generated on the premises can be burned:

- Agricultural wastes: material generated by crop, horticultural, or livestock production practices. This includes fence posts and scrap lumber but not buildings.
 - Landscape wastes: plant matter such as tree trimmings, branches, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery, yard trimmings, and crop residues.
 - Land-clearing wastes: plant matter which is removed when land is cleared for residential, commercial, or industrial development. This material may be burned only under certain circumstances and WITH PRIOR WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM OHIO EPA.
 - Residential waste: wastes such as wood or paper products that are generated by one-, two-, or three-family residences. Garbage may not be open burned.
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However, no open burning can take place within 1,000 feet of an inhabited building located off the property where the fire is set. Nor can the fire obscure visibility for roadways, railroad tracks, or air fields.

No wastes generated off the premises may be burned. For example, a tree-trimming contractor may not haul branches and limbs to another site to burn them.

Open burning is prohibited when air pollution warnings, alerts, or emergencies are in effect.

Does Ohio EPA ever allow exceptions to the rules?

Under certain circumstances, yes. However, to burn a prohibited material or set a fire in a restricted area, YOU MUST RECEIVE WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM OHIO EPA BEFORE YOU BEGIN BURNING.

Can a community enact local ordinances to allow open burning?

Local ordinances cannot be less strict than the state law described in this pamphlet. They can be more strict, however.

What will happen to me if I'm caught illegally open burning?

Ohio EPA has the legal authority to enforce the open burning laws. Violations can result in substantial penalties. If you have any questions, or would like to report a suspected open burning

incident, contact your Ohio EPA district office or your local air pollution control agency. The accompanying map indicates the agency to call for your county.

For a complete copy of Ohio's open burning regulations, contact:

Division of Air Pollution Control
Ohio EPA
Lazarus Government Center
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049
614-644-2270



OhioEPA
District Offices

CDO-Central District Office- (800) 686-2330

NEDO-Northeast District Office- (800) 686-6330

NWDO-Northwest District Office- (800) 686-6930

SEDO-Southeast District Office- (800) 686-7330

SWDO-Southwest District Office- (800) 686-8930

Local Air Pollution Control Agencies

1. Akron Regional Air Quality (800) 589-2480
2. Canton Air Pollution Control Division (330) 489-3385
3. Hamilton County Dept. of Environmental Services (800) 889-0474
4. Cleveland Division of Air Quality (216) 664-2297
5. Regional Air Pollution Control Agency (800) 458-2115
6. Lake County Air Pollution Control (440) 350-2543
7. Portsmouth Air Pollution Unit (740) 353-5156
8. Toledo Environmental Services Division (419) 936-3015
9. Mahoning-Trumbull Air Pollution Control (330) 743-3333

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Before You Light It...

Know Ohio's Open Burning Regulations

May 2003