



PORTLAND FIRE & RESCUE



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OUTDOOR BURNING

Dear Resident,

Calls to check on outdoor burns are only a small part of the workday for Portland Fire & Rescue. We respond to many calls each year, including medical calls, fires, rescues, traffic accidents, hazardous material investigations and many others. Because of our large call volume, we strive to educate residents of this city about burning regulations in order to help minimize unnecessary responses to safe and legal burn activity.

For specific backyard burning regulations for areas **outside the City of Portland**, you should request information from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). During specific times of the year, it is legal to burn yard debris in such areas as long as you follow safe outdoor burning guidelines. **Within the City**, this type of burning is prohibited, but there are a few types of outdoor burning that **are** legal. These are:

1. Cooking with standard **barbecue equipment**.
2. **Ceremonial fires** for large gatherings or institutions, when a permit from the Fire Marshal's Office is obtained. Written authorization from the Property Owner is required. This authorization needs to be signed, dated, and presented when applying for the permit.
3. **Recreational fires** defined as: burning clean, dry, cord type firewood as in a standard campfire type setting. When burning a fire of this type, you must build the fire in a pit or pan prepared for this purpose. The fire must not be larger than a standard campfire, less than 3 feet in diameter, with pile less than 2 feet in height.

General rules that apply to these legal, recreational fires:

1. A recreational fire located in a pit shall be no closer than 25 feet from a structure. Fires contained in fireplace-type receptacles or Chimineeahs shall be no closer than 15 feet from a structure or the distance listed in the manufacture's instruction, whichever is less. When required by the Fire Marshal, outdoor burning device stacks shall be equipped with a spark-arresting, 12-gauge wire mesh screen with openings of not less than 3/8" nor more than 1/2".
2. A responsible person shall be in attendance at all times and have approved fire-extinguishing equipment close at hand.
3. The smoke from the fire must not be of a noxious quality or amount that causes complaints from the neighbors.
4. No garbage or similar material is to be burned in these fires.
5. Observe common safety practices while enjoying the recreational fire, e.g. cease burning if the wind picks up to 15 mph or higher, be careful with the consumption of alcohol by any persons around the fire, watch small children in the vicinity, etc.

Our policy does not call for response to the safe, recreational fires as described above, but our officers can require the extinguishment of any outdoor burning activity if safety rules are being violated.

This educational handout is given to you in the hope that we can help you enjoy a safe, recreational fire while ensuring that our units are able to respond quickly to the many emergencies in your neighborhood in the quickest possible fashion.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have further questions, you may call 503-823-3700.