

What is open burning?

Open burning is any burning conducted outdoors that does not pass through a stack, duct, or chimney. Open burning includes burning of residential solid waste, prescribed burns, crop residue burning, and fires for recreation and warming, weed control, and training. Fires in burn barrels are considered a form of open burning as well.

Open burning in Idaho is regulated by state law and rules, tribal code, and local ordinances. Sections 600-623 of the *Rules for the Control of Air Pollution in Idaho* describe the state's regulatory authority over open burning, under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The state rules apply to all lands other than the five Indian Reservations.

Regulation of open burning is needed to minimize the impact of smoke on public health.

Smoke generated by open burning is comprised primarily of small particles and gases. Smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing coughing, a scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, headaches, stinging eyes, or a runny nose. Inhaling smoke may worsen the symptoms of those with heart or respiratory conditions.

This brochure provides information on open burning of residential solid waste. Specifically, it covers:

- conditions under which residential open burning may occur
- materials that can and cannot be legally burned
- proper burning basics
- alternatives to burning
- protection against smoke impacts

A brief overview of other types of allowable open burning in Idaho is also provided.

For more information

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

State Office
Air Quality Division
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0502

Regional Offices

Boise
1445 N. Orchard
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0550
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

Coeur d'Alene
2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

Idaho Falls
900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

Lewiston
1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

Pocatello
444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

Twin Falls
650 Addison Ave. W,
Suite 110
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190
toll-free: (800) 270-1663

Web Resources

Open "Outdoor" Burning Guidelines
www.deq.idaho.gov/open-burning

Residential "Backyard" Burning
www.deq.idaho.gov/residential-open-burning

Rules for the Control of Air Pollution in Idaho
<http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/58/0101.pdf>



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Light it Right!

Idaho's Guidelines for Open "Outdoor" Burning of Residential Solid Waste

Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov



What residents can burn

Unless a burn ban is in effect...

...residents who have house-to-house garbage collection may burn tree leaves, garden waste, and yard trimmings if allowed by local government ordinances during certain periods of the year.

...residents who do not have house-to-house garbage collection may burn rubbish (such as paper and cardboard), tree leaves, garden waste, and yard trimmings if burning is conducted on the property where the waste was generated.

What cannot be burned

Burning of most processed or manufactured materials is prohibited (exemptions may apply). These include:

- garbage from food preparation
- dead animals or animal waste
- junk motor vehicles or parts
- tires or other rubber materials
- plastics
- asphalt
- tar and petroleum materials
- paints
- preservative-treated wood
- trade waste (commercial, industrial, or construction)
- insulated wire
- pathogenic (disease-causing) waste
- hazardous waste

Local ordinances may further restrict or prohibit residential open burning. In addition, burners may be required to obtain permits in some jurisdictions.

Burn Bans

DEQ may issue burn bans as a result of weather and air quality conditions. When a burn ban has been issued, outdoor burning and the use of wood stoves and fireplaces are prohibited. Check DEQ's Daily Air Quality Reports and Forecasts webpage at www.deq.idaho.gov/daily-air-quality-reports-forecasts to find out about burn restrictions.

Alternatives to burning

Burning can waste valuable resources. It may be possible to avoid open burning by better planning, reuse, or recycling.

- Recycle paper products whenever possible.
- Compost yard debris and kitchen scraps.
- Reuse old lumber whenever possible.
- Buy or rent a chipper and use chips for mulch and compost.
- Work with neighbors to organize a neighborhood cleanup day.
- Dispose of waste at your local landfill rather than burn it.
- Take hazardous materials, including oil-based paints, solvents, garden chemicals, and car fluids to a hazardous waste collection site. Burning these materials is illegal and extremely dangerous.

Proper burning basics

If no alternative to burning is available:

- **Get the proper permit if required.** DEQ does not issue residential burn permits. Contact your local government or fire protection service.
- **Burn during the middle of the day** when ventilation is generally good and smoke dissipates more easily.
- **Burn when fuels are dry and well aerated** so the fire is hot, yet manageable. Wet or dirt-covered materials will smolder and create more smoke.
- **Burn in open areas** away from overhead branches and wires.
- **Scrape away burnable materials** on the ground several feet around the piles. The result should be bare soil.
- **Never leave fires unattended**, and have fire suppression equipment and water available. You can be held responsible for any damage caused by a fire that gets out of control.
- **Burn at least 50 feet away** from any structure.
- **Test burn a small area** prior to burning.

Protect your health

To protect against smoke impacts while burning:

- **Pay attention to local air quality reports** and stay alert to news coverage or health warnings related to smoke.
- **Minimize burning time** to minimize smoke exposure.
- **Be aware of signs of overexposure** to smoke such as fatigue and illness.
- **Delay burning for another day** if it looks smoky outside.

Other types of burning

The state's air pollution control rules also regulate the following types of open burning:

- **Recreational and warming fires.** Fires for preparation of food, campfires, and barbecues are allowable, as are small fires for hand warming.
- **Weed control fires.** Fires for weed abatement along such areas as fence lines, ditch banks, and canal banks are allowable.
- **Training fires.** Fires to train firefighters are allowed. Contact your local DEQ regional office prior to burning.
- **Prescribed burning.** Open burning of forest and rangeland to accomplish land management objectives is allowed. To find out more, visit www.deq.idaho.gov/wildland-fires.
- **Crop residue burning.** Growers may burn crop residue when approved by DEQ. Training, permits, and fees are required. Learn more at www.deq.idaho.gov/crop-residue-burning.

Questions?

**Contact the
DEQ Regional Office
nearest you (see reverse).**