

Before You Light It.... Know Ohio's Open Burning Regulations October 2008

Ohio's open burning rules are in place to protect human health and safety. Even if a person meets the criteria to burn legally, it is a violation of public nuisance law if smoke from the fire affects someone's health or welfare, including the enjoyment of their property.

What does the Ohio EPA consider open burning? Isn't it harmless?

Open burning is any set outdoor fire that does not vent to a chimney or stack. Some studies indicate that even small camp fires burning clean wood can emit harmful chemicals. Burning "unclean" materials can be even more hazardous. For example, when you burn refuse in burn barrels or open piles, 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 what you can burn and where.

Why is open burning a problem?

Open burning 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 meet health-based air quality standards, especially in or near large cities. The gases released by open burning can also corrode metal siding and damage paint on buildings.

Where is open burning allowed?

To see a general summary of areas where open burning is permitted, [click here](#). Detailed rules and regulations may be found in the [Ohio Administrative Code 3745-19, Open Burning Regulations](#).

What open burning is never allowed?

Under Ohio law, these materials may not be burned anywhere in the state at any time:

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

Other restrictions:

- Open burning is not allowed when air pollution warnings, alerts or emergencies are in effect.
- Fires cannot 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.

Can a community regulate open burning?

Yes. However, local ordinances cannot be less strict than the state law. If you intend to do any open burning, you are advised to consult your local community official or fire department for information on burning ordinances. For more information about exceptions related to storm debris, see the [Community Guide to Open Burning](#).

What happens if I'm caught illegally open burning?

Ohio EPA has the authority to enforce the state's 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. Ohio EPA is represented by five district offices and nine local air agencies. For the appropriate contact, please refer to our county contact list at the bottom of the [main open burning Web page](#).

Where can I find more details?

More information on Ohio EPA's open burning regulations are available at www.epa.state.oh.us/pic/facts/openburn.pdf and at www.epa.state.oh.us/dapc/general/openburning.html.



