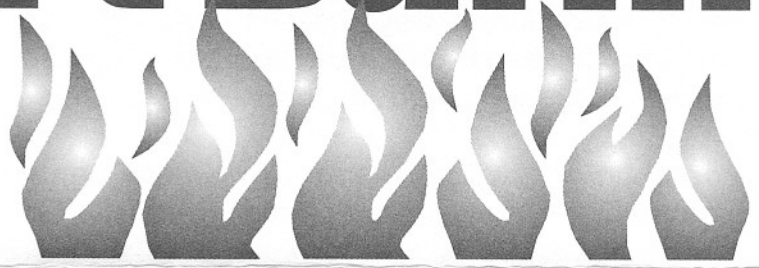


# Breathe ...

Division of Air Quality  
www.ncair.org

# Don't Burn!

*Smoke from Outdoor Fires is Unhealthy to Breathe and Pollutes the Air*



There are a lot of misunderstandings about outdoor or open burning in North Carolina. Some people think it's OK to burn trash in barrels because they've always done it that way. It's not. Others think it's always OK to burn leaves and branches in the fall. But that's not so in cities and counties that pick up yard waste.

The N.C. Division of Air Quality enforces the state open burning rules, and many local governments have additional restrictions on outdoor fires. Violating these rules can be expensive -- with fines as high as \$10,000 or more for serious cases or repeat violations. Substantial fines can be assessed, even for minor or first-time violations.



## If It Doesn't Grow, Don't Burn It

The basic message of the state open-burning rule is simple: Only leaves, branches and other plant growth can be burned – nothing else. That means no trash, lumber, tires or old newspapers. If local pickup is available, you can't burn even leaves and branches. Do not burn:

- Garbage, paper and cardboard
- Tires and other rubber products
- Building materials, including lumber and wood scraps
- Wire, plastics and synthetic materials
- Asphalt shingles and heavy oils
- Paints, household and agricultural chemicals
- Buildings, mobile homes and other structures
- Anything when the air quality forecast is Code Orange, Red or Purple

What is allowed under the law? Homeowners can burn yard trimmings if it's allowed under local ordinances, no public pickup is available and it doesn't cause a public nuisance. Yard waste must not include logs more than 6 inches in diameter and stumps. Other allowable burning includes campfires, outdoor barbecues and bonfires for festive occasions. Landowners or contractors also can burn vegetation to clear land or rights-of-way, provided that:

- Burning is done on the site of origin.
- Prevailing winds are away from built-up areas and roads. If winds are blowing toward public roads, fires must be at least 250 feet away.
- Fires are at least 1,000 feet away from occupied buildings.
- Burning is done between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., and nothing is added outside of these hours.

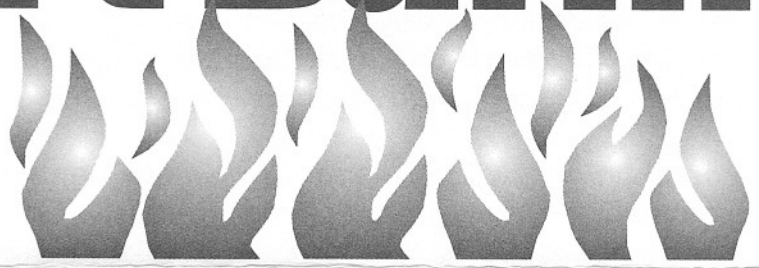
Other occasions where open burning is allowed – with DAQ approval – include fires for: training fire-fighting personnel; managing forest lands or wildlife habitats; controlling agricultural diseases and pests; and disposing of materials generated by hurricanes, tornadoes and other natural disasters. You may need a permit from the N.C. Division of Forest Resources or local governments before you burn, even for allowable purposes. However, such permits do not excuse a person from following the DAQ's open-burning rules.

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