



CODE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINE

BONFIRES

Office of the Fire Marshal
3639 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43207
Telephone: 614-221-3132 Ext. 7-5604

**** PERMIT REQUIRED ****

This publication outlines the City of Columbus and State of Ohio Fire Code (i.e., Fire Prevention Code or OFC) fire safety requirements and prohibitions related to bonfires conducted within the City of Columbus. This publication does not address recreational fires, controlled burning, charcoal grills and open-flame cooking devices, or portable outdoor fireplaces.

**** PLEASE REVIEW THIS ENTIRE PUBLICATION BEFORE TAKING ACTION ****

Questions regarding the content of this publication should be directed to the Fire Inspection Captain at 614-221-3132 Ext. 7-5604 during regular office hours, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

OVERVIEW:

A bonfire is a constantly attended outdoor fire utilized primarily for ceremonial purposes that has a fuel area greater than 3 feet in diameter and greater than 2 feet in height. The size of the bonfire (i.e., quantity of fuel or fuel area) may be limited at the discretion of the Fire Marshal. A bonfire is a form of open burning and requires a permit.

OPEN BURNING DEFINED:

The Fire Prevention Code defines "open burning" as the burning of materials wherein products of combustion are emitted directly into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Open burning does not include road flares, smudgepots and similar devices associated with safety or occupational uses typically considered open flames, recreational fires or use of portable outdoor fireplaces. For the purpose of this definition, a chamber shall be regarded as enclosed when, during the time combustion occurs, only apertures, ducts, stacks, flues or chimneys necessary to provide combustion air and permit the escape of exhaust gas are open.

PERMIT REQUIRED:

In accordance with Section 307.2 of the Ohio Fire Code a Fire Prevention Permit for a bonfire shall be obtained from the Fire Marshal for each location. This permit requirement does not apply to recreational fires, fire set for the training of firefighters under the direction of the Chief of the Fire Department, or fire set by a public health or safety officer where a health or fire hazard cannot be abated by any other means.

PERMIT APPLICATION:

Complete a permit application for a bonfire and include the documentation or information listed below. The permit application is available online at: www.columbusfire.org.

The following documentation or information must be submitted with the permit application:

1. Property Owner Permission. Bonfires may only be conducted with the property owner's permission. No person shall kindle nor authorize to be kindled nor maintain any bonfire in such a manner that will endanger the property of another.

2. Site Plan. A plat or site plan of the property shall be provided with the permit application and shall show the following information:

- Proposed location of the bonfire.
- Location of all utilities such as gas meters and overhead power lines.
- Location of all structures and woodlands within 150 feet of the burn location.
- Location of the two closest fire hydrants and all fire department access routes.

SITE INSPECTION & APPROVAL REQUIRED:

Ready to Burn? When the bonfire is ready to commence, you must first arrange for a site inspection with the Fire Marshal. Burning may not commence until a valid permit for a bonfire has been issued. Follow these steps:

1. Schedule a Site Inspection. The site inspection must be conducted on the day of the bonfire event, and must be scheduled at least one business day prior to the day of the bonfire. To schedule the site inspection, contact the Special Inspection Unit at 614-221-3132 Ext. 7-5605 Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

2. Notify Fire Dispatch Center. Notification is a condition of the permit and may help reduce unnecessary emergency responses by the fire department. Thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of a bonfire, and only after approval has been granted by the Fire Marshal in the form of a valid permit contact the Columbus Division of Fire Communication Center (FAO) at 614-221-2345 and provide/obtain the following information:

- Provide the address/location of the bonfire.
- Provide the approximate duration of the bonfire (3 hours maximum).
- Advise FAO that you will call at the conclusion of the bonfire event confirming that all burning activities have stopped.

3. Post-Burn Requirements. At the conclusion of the bonfire event, be sure the fire is completely extinguished and notify FAO at 614-221-2345 that burning has stopped.

SPOT INSPECTIONS:

Periodic spot inspections may be conducted by the Fire Marshal and/or the fire department to ensure compliance with fire safety requirements.

FIRE SAFETY REQUIRMENTS:

In addition to the general prohibitions and forestry-related requirements and prohibitions, if any, the following Fire Prevention Code fire safety requirements apply to recreational fires kindled in the City of Columbus:

1. Property Owner Permission. Bonfires may only be conducted with the property owner's permission. No person shall kindle nor authorize to be kindled nor maintain any recreational fire in such a manner that will endanger the property of another.

2. Distance from Combustibles. Bonfires shall not be conducted within 50 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 50 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

3. Fuel Area Limitation. A bonfire fire shall have a total fuel area of 5' x 5' x 5'.

4. Allowable Fuels. Burn only dry, well-seasoned firewood or similar clean burning wood. Land-clearing waste and/or rubbish shall not be used as a fuel for a recreational fire.

5. Time Limitation. A bonfire should not burn longer than 3 hours.

6. Attendance. Fires shall be constantly attended until completely extinguished. A smoldering fire is not completely extinguished and should never be left unattended.

7. Means of Extinguishment. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization.

GENERAL PROHIBITIONS:

Endangering Property Prohibited. In accordance with Section 307.7.1 of the Fire Prevention Code, no person shall kindle, authorize to be kindled, or maintain any permitted (i.e., allowable) fire in such a manner that will endanger the property of another. This might include an unlawful or unsafe recreational fire.

Burning of Refuse Prohibited. With the exception of the destruction and reduction of land-clearing waste through an approved controlled burning operation, the burning of refuse shall be prohibited and shall mean and include garbage, rubbish, and trade waste defined as follows:

- **Garbage.** Garbage shall mean animal and vegetable matter such as that originating in houses, kitchens, restaurants and hotels, produce markets, food service or processing establishments, greenhouses, and hospitals, clinics or veterinary facilities.
- **Rubbish.** Rubbish shall mean solids not considered to be highly flammable or explosive such as, but not limited to, rags, old clothes, leather, rubber, carpets, wood, excelsior, paper, ashes, tree branches, yard trimmings, furniture, metal food containers, glass, crockery, masonry, and other similar materials.
- **Trade Waste.** Trade waste shall mean all solid or liquid material resulting from construction, building operations, or the prosecution of any business, trade or industry such as, but not limited to, plastic products, cinders and other forms of solid or liquid waste materials.

For information about the environmental and health hazards related to open visit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) online at:

<http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dapc/general/openburning.aspx>

Ignitable Liquids or Hazardous Materials Prohibited. Combustible and flammable liquids, as well as other hazardous materials, shall not be used to aid the ignition of any open burning or recreational fire. Furthermore, the application, dispensing, or use of a combustible or flammable

liquid, or any other hazardous material, upon or into the fuel used in any controlled burn, bonfire, or recreational fire may be considered an unauthorized release of a hazardous material and is strictly prohibited.

Materials Producing Dense Smoke Prohibited. The burning of rubber, asphaltic materials, combustible and flammable liquids, impregnated wood or similar materials which produce dense smoke is considered objectionable, a hazard and nuisance to the community, and is prohibited.

Hazardous Fires Prohibited. The Fire Marshal or fire department may order the immediate extinguishment of any recreational fire or open burning because of one or more of the following hazardous situations:

- Unattended fires
- Unprotected or uncontained fires deemed capable of spreading
- Inadequate fire extinguishing equipment/materials
- Inappropriate or hazardous materials used as fuel
- Air contaminants, smoke, or other materials which may cause a traffic hazard