

THERE IS NO SUCH PLACE AS A FARAWAY PLACE TO BURN



We're All In This Together

Let's put out the smoke from burning household trash.



In rural Vermont, the burning of household trash has increased to 14,000 tons a year.

Only untreated wood and yard debris may be burned legally in Vermont. Some municipalities have banned all burning.

Be a good neighbor  **Protect our health**

The Problem

Burning today's trash is illegal because it is dangerous to our health.

Today's trash (whether from our household rubbish, construction debris, commercial waste or other garbage) contains plastics, heavy metals and a variety of synthetic materials. When these are burned, many chemical reactions take place and poisons are released into the air. Which poison and how much toxin is released depends on the contents of the trash being burned, the temperature of the fire, and the supply of oxygen.

Municipal incinerators burn at over 1800 degrees and add enough oxygen for complete combustion. These very hot fires completely destroy some of the dangerous chemicals. Many of the remaining toxins are captured in the smokestack using high technology. What is left over is discharged high into the atmosphere where it has some chance of being diluted before it is breathed and enters our lungs.

When trash is burned in a burn barrel or woodstove or when businesses burn their wastes in piles or small incinerators, the fire is not hot enough to destroy poisonous substances. Nor does it receive enough oxygen to burn efficiently. There are no safeguards to capture toxins in the smoke and the left-over ashes are rarely disposed of properly. Most important of all, these poisonous substances are released right at ground level. They directly contaminate - in very concentrated form - the spaces where we live and work and our children play.

No kind of combustion is entirely safe. Even burning "clean" and legal substances such as untreated wood and yard debris cause pollution. But most of today's trash is far from "clean." Dyes, inks, household chemicals, plastics and construction debris make burning rubbish a highly dangerous game.

For one example, if you add chlorine to your burn pile in the form of #3 plastics,  (PVC—polyvinyl chloride—containers), hydrogen chloride gas will be released in the smoke. When breathed, this gas combines with water to form hydrochloric acid in your lungs which causes fluid build up and possible ulceration of the respiratory tract.

When any trash is burned, a great variety of dangerous chemical combinations are possible. Some only cause acute respiratory symptoms or eye irritations. Others accumulate to cause long term respiratory problems or fatal disease.

**PLEASE
DON'T
BURN
TRASH**

Be a good neighbor



Protect our health

Sponsors are needed to get the message out—such as flyers included in newsletters or bill mailing help in printing flyers and posters, help do postering. Different versions of this message are available camera-ready. Write to "View on Burning", RD 2 Box 1464, Plainfield, VT 05667.

Produced by concerned citizens with information from the Bristol, Vermont Recycling Committee and printed by the Agency of Natural Resources.