

**The program described in this pamphlet is one of several administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation as part of this mission.**

**For more information about backyard burning or other air pollution issues, please visit the Air Quality and Climate Division's website at:**

**<http://dec.vermont.gov/air-quality>**

**To receive additional copies of this pamphlet, or to request an Open Burn Permit please call or email:**

**Dave Shepard  
P: (802) 272-4088  
dave.shepard@vermont.gov**

**Or**

**John Wakefield  
P: (802) 279-5674  
john.wakefield@vermont.gov**

**Failure to comply with Vermont's open burning regulations may result in significant monetary penalties .**

**For information on recycling contact your local solid waste district office.**

**Air Quality and Climate Division  
Department of Environmental  
Conservation  
Agency of Natural Resources  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3802**

**Pamphlet No. 4, rev. Nov 2018**

**Air Quality and Climate Division  
Davis Building—2nd Floor  
One National Life Drive  
Montpelier, Vermont 05620**

# **Air Pollution Control in Vermont**



## **GUIDANCE ON OPEN BURNING**





## So You Want To Burn Something?

Open-air burning is sort of a tradition. You know, you put some brush, leaves,

garbage, junk from the attic, or maybe construction debris in a big pile in a field or in a burn barrel and light a match. Disposal fees at the local landfill go up in smoke.

A lot of other things go up in smoke too, things that can cause serious health problems and damage the environment. That's why the Legislature, through the state Agency of Natural Resources, has established regulations to control air pollution. There simply isn't enough clean air left to do whatever we want. We must protect ourselves from the harmful effects of outdated "traditions" such as open-air burning.

Roughly 7 to 9 percent of what you burn ends up as air pollution, with some pollutants being highly toxic. And that figure does not include the large amount of carbon dioxide, a common "greenhouse gas," that is given off.

There are many effects of open-air burning, some of which are more immediate than others. The smoke from your fire might not bother you, but it could be a real nuisance or a serious health threat to your neighbor, especially if he or she has any respiratory illnesses.

And, a variety of illnesses can actually be caused, over time, by air pollution, including cancer, emphysema, asthma, and chronic bronchitis.

Let's face it: A lot of open burning just isn't necessary. Brush can be composted, piled up for wildlife, or just left to rot.

## Isn't There Anything I Can Still Burn?



are allowed:

- Campfires and outdoor barbecues
- Burning of leaves, brush, deadwood, tree cuttings, and weeds from your property
- Natural wood bonfires on festive occasions

However, it is *illegal to burn*:

- Paper and cardboard
- Manufactured wood products such as:  
Plywood/ OSB (Oriented Strand Board)
- Tires and other rubber products
- Treated, painted, or finished wood
- Tarpaper or asphalt shingles
- Plastics
- Garbage

Yes, certain kinds of open burning are still allowed if they don't create a nuisance and if they are not prohibited by local ordinances. These types of fires

Construction and demolition debris in the form of dimensional lumber, that is not chemically treated with a preservative, paint or oil may be burned, however an Open Burn Permit from the Air Quality and Climate Division is required. Contact information for obtaining an Open Burn Permit can be found on the reverse side of this pamphlet.

Think again before you light that match. Many recycling centers around the state accept paper, cardboard, and various plastics. Open burning is simply a very poor way of getting rid of combustible materials.



## What Must I Do If I'm Planning A Burn?

You do not need an Open Burn Permit for allowable fires.

However, in many cases you will need a local permit - from either your town or the local forest fire warden. Open burning is considered a nuisance, and officials may establish rules to lessen the nuisance. Check with local officials if you have any questions.

The Vermont Air Quality and Climate Division was established to maintain and improve the quality of Vermont's air. Clean air will safeguard our citizens' health and safety, promote economic and social development, and enhance enjoyment of the state's natural attractions.