

Each year, there are more than 1,000 wildfires in the state of Ohio. Wildfires in Ohio threaten and cause damage to homes, private property, trees and landscapes. More importantly, lives are placed at risk.

Most of these fires are preventable. Most of Ohio's wildfires are the result of arson and careless open-burning (burning of trash, debris and brush).

Ohio Law prohibits Open-Burning in the spring and fall.

Open-burning is particularly dangerous in the spring and fall, when the leaves are on the ground, the grass is not green and the weather is warm, dry and windy. As a result, open burning in Ohio is prohibited in unincorporated areas in March, April, May, October, and November, 6 am to 6 pm.

Prescribed fire can be used as a tool to eliminate undesirable vegetation and reduce hazardous fuel levels.

When managed carefully, prescribed fire (an intentionally or naturally ignited fire that burns under specific conditions, in a predetermined area, to attain planned resource management objectives) can stimulate the growth of native vegetation and reduce fire hazards brought on by the accumulation of dead vegetation.

Only Certified Prescribed Fire Managers can conduct prescribed fires in Ohio during the spring and fall.

To conduct a prescribed fire when open-burning is prohibited, an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager must request a waiver from Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry.

Smoke waivers from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) are required for most prescribed fires and open burns.

Check with the Ohio EPA for more information on smoke laws in your area.

Remember! To burn between 6 am and 6 pm in the months of March, April, May, October or November, you must be an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager and you must have a waiver from the Division of Forestry.



## Ohio's Fire Laws:

What you need to know about ODNR's fire laws before conducting prescribed fires & open burns in Ohio.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry

What is the Difference between an Open Burn and a Prescribed Fire?

In Ohio, most outdoor burning in unincorporated (rural) areas is prohibited in the months of March, April, May, October and November between 6 am and 6 pm. This ban applies to both Open Burns and Prescribed Fires.

The term "Open Burns" refers to debris, brush and trash fires. Open burns are typically fires that are used to get rid of waste or debris. No open burns are allowed when the burn ban is in effect.

"Prescribed Fires" refers to fires that are intentionally lit, under predetermined conditions, to meet various resource management objectives, such as vegetation regeneration, forest fuels reduction, or wildlife management. Prescribed fires may be conducted during the burn ban, but only with the permission of the Chief of the Division of Forestry.

Outdoor burning in Ohio is regulated by:

- Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Forestry.
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA).

#### OEPA'S OUTDOOR BURNING LAWS:

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency regulates smoke emissions from outdoor burning. Contact your local OEPA District Office for more information on OEPA smoke regulations, or, online at: [www.epa.state.oh.us](http://www.epa.state.oh.us)

#### ODNR'S OUTDOOR BURNING LAWS:

ODNR Division of Forestry law, ORC 1503.18, bans outdoor burning statewide in unincorporated areas in the spring and fall between 6 am and 6 pm. To help prevent wildfires, all open burning and prescribed fires are prohibited in Ohio in the months of March, April, May, October, and November, between 6 am and 6 pm.

Section C of this law allows the Chief of the Division of Forestry to waive the ban.

It is the Division of Forestry's policy to only waive this ban for individuals that have been certified by the Division as a Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. There is no charge for the waiver, but it must be requested in writing by the Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. Waivers will only be granted for prescribed fires that have a completed burn plan in place prior to the burn. No waivers will be granted for debris, trash or brush burning, or any other kind of open burning.

Interested in becoming an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager?

To be recognized as an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager, you must either be qualified under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type II OR complete at least one of the two following courses:

- Ohio's Certified Prescribed Fire Manager Course
- The Nature Conservancy's "Workshop on Ecological Burning"

The Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager course is offered annually through ODNR and covers various topics, such as:

- Laws, Rules, and Procedures Affecting Prescribed Fire in Ohio
- Ohio Fire Ecology
- Prescribed Fire Planning Process
- Firing Methods
- Smoke Management Techniques
- Burn Management
- Contingency Planning
- Fire Behavior Predictions
- Burn Plan Development
- Field Exercises

For information on upcoming courses, contact the Division of Forestry:

1-877-247-8733, or: [www.ohiodnr.com/forestry](http://www.ohiodnr.com/forestry)

## Checklist for Conducting a Prescribed Fire during the Spring and Fall:

- ✓ Become an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. All prescribed fires that are conducted when open burning is prohibited must have a certified prescribed fire manager on site.
- ✓ Complete a burn plan. Burn plans must meet standards set by ODNR Division of Forestry and must be on-site and followed the day of the burn.
- ✓ Submit a request for a burn waiver from ODNR Division of Forestry. This waiver is required if you plan to conduct a prescribed burn in March, April, May, October or November between 6 am and 6 pm. No waivers are granted during this time for open burns (trash fires, brush fires, etc.).
- ✓ Know and comply with your local OEPA smoke management requirements. OEPA has detailed regulations regarding the smoke emissions from prescribed fires and open burns. Contact your local OEPA District Office for information and instructions on how to comply with these regulations.
- ✓ Wait until the weather conditions are right. Burn only on a day where the weather conditions match those described in the plan.
- ✓ Notify local authorities on burn day. When weather conditions permit the prescribed fire, notify local police and fire departments that you will be burning.

## What can I burn? The following open fires are *allowed* in Ohio

If you live in a county where there is a number on the map, contact the local air agency that is identified. In all other counties, contact an Ohio EPA district office.

### Local Air Pollution Control Agencies

1. Akron Regional Air Quality Management District  
(800) 589-2480  
araqmd.org
2. Canton Division of Air Pollution Control  
(330) 489-3385  
canto@health.org/apc/
3. Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency  
(800) 889-0474  
southwestohair.org
4. Cleveland Division of Air Quality  
(216) 664-2297  
cleveland@health.org/network/air-quality/air-quality.php
5. Regional Air Pollution Control Agency  
(800) 458-2115  
rapca.org
6. Lake County Air Pollution Control  
(440) 350-2543  
legind.org/air-quality/
7. Portsmouth Air Pollution Control  
(740) 353-5156  
portsmouthoh.org/health/air-division/
8. Toledo Division of Environmental Services  
(419) 936-3015  
http://toledoohio.gov/services/public-utilities/environmental-services/air/
9. Mahoning-Tribull Air Pollution Control Agency  
(330) 743-3333  
yehd.com/Services/AirPollution.aspx



### Ohio EPA District Offices

- CDO** Central District Office  
(800) 686-2330\* (614) 728-3778
- NEBO** Northeast District Office  
(800) 686-6330\* (330) 963-1200
- NWDO** Northwest District Office  
(800) 686-6930\* (419) 352-8461
- SBD** Southeast District Office  
(800) 686-7330\* (740) 385-8501
- SWDO** Southwest District Office  
(800) 686-8930\* (937) 285-6357

\* Toll-free numbers are for calls within Ohio.

TYPE OF FIRE	INSIDE A VILLAGE OR CITY* if generated on property	OUTSIDE A VILLAGE OR CITY* if generated on property
Barbecues, campfires, cookouts	Wood stack no larger than 2 ft. high x 3 ft. wide. Use clean, seasoned firewood or equivalent.	Wood stack no larger than 2 ft. high x 3 ft. wide. Use clean, seasoned firewood or equivalent.
Agricultural waste	Agricultural wastes and plant matter such as tree trimmings, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery and material from crop or livestock production. This includes fence posts and scrap lumber, but does not include buildings, land clearing waste, dead animals or animal waste. <i>Fire must be more than 1,000 feet from neighbor's inhabited building. Must notify Ohio EPA in advance.</i>	Agricultural wastes and plant matter such as tree trimmings, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery and material from crop or livestock production. This includes fence posts and scrap lumber, but does not include buildings, land clearing waste, dead animals or animal waste. <i>Fire must be more than 1,000 feet from neighbor's inhabited building. Request permission from Ohio EPA if pile greater than 20 ft. wide x 10 ft. high / 4,000 cubic feet. This may take two weeks.</i>
Land-clearing waste	<b>Not permitted</b> in city limits.	Plant matter such as tree trimmings, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery and crop residues. <i>With prior written permission from Ohio EPA. This may take two weeks.</i>
Residential waste	<b>Not permitted</b> in city limits.	Plant matter such as tree trimmings, stumps, brush, weeds, leaves, grass, shrubbery and crop residues that are generated by one-, two-, or three-family residences. <i>Fire must be more than 1,000 feet from neighbor's inhabited building. Request permission from Ohio EPA if pile greater than 10 ft. x 10 ft. This may take two weeks.</i>
Ceremonial fires	Wood stack no larger than 5 ft. high x 5 ft. wide. Duration no longer than three hours. Use clean, seasoned firewood or equivalent. <i>Must notify Ohio EPA in advance.</i>	Wood stack no larger than 5 ft. high x 5 ft. wide. Duration no longer than three hours. <i>No notification required.</i>
Occupational fires: welding torches, heating tar, heating for warmup of outdoor workers and strikers	Use clean, seasoned firewood. For example, a heating fire contained in a 55-gallon drum.	Use clean, seasoned firewood. For example, a heating fire contained in a 55-gallon drum.
Firefighter training	<i>With prior written permission from Ohio EPA. This may take two weeks.</i>	<i>With prior written permission from Ohio EPA. This may take two weeks.</i>
Explosive material disposal	<i>With prior written permission from Ohio EPA. This may take two weeks.</i>	<i>With prior written permission from Ohio EPA. This may take two weeks.</i>
Horticultural, silvicultural, range or wildlife management practices	Local health department, Ohio Department of Agriculture or U.S. Department of Agriculture verifies to Ohio EPA that open burning is the only appropriate control method <i>and must notify Ohio EPA in advance.</i>	Local health department, Ohio Department of Agriculture or U.S. Department of Agriculture verifies to Ohio EPA that open burning is the only appropriate control method.
Disease or pest control	Local health department, Ohio Department of Agriculture or U.S. Department of Agriculture verifies to Ohio EPA that open burning is the only appropriate control method.	Local health department, Ohio Department of Agriculture or U.S. Department of Agriculture verifies to Ohio EPA that open burning is the only appropriate control method.

\* villages and cities are considered "restricted areas," which include:

- within the boundaries of any municipal corporation;
- within corporation limits and a 1,000-foot zone outside any municipal corporation having a population of 1,000 to 10,000; and
- within corporation limits and a one-mile zone outside any municipal corporation with a population of more than 10,000.

Call your local municipality for corporation boundaries.

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

### 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.

### 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—unless approved for control of disease by a governing agency.

### 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.

### Does Ohio EPA ever allow exceptions to the rules?

Under certain circumstances, yes. However, to burn a prohibited material or set a fire in a restricted area, you must receive written permission from Ohio EPA before you begin burning. This may take two weeks.

### Can a community regulate open burning?

Yes. However, local ordinances cannot be less strict than the state law.

### 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. See the map in this brochure for the agency to contact in your area.

### Health Concerns

Burning household waste produces many toxic chemicals and is one of the largest known sources of dioxin in the nation. Other air pollutants from open burning include particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, lead and mercury.

These pollutants have been linked to several health problems, including asthma, respiratory illnesses, nervous system damage, kidney and liver damage, and reproductive or developmental disorders.

### What You Can Do Instead of Open Burning

- Reduce the amount of waste you generate.
- Reuse items in another way.
- Recycle - Contact your waste disposal provider about curbside pickup or drop-off locations for bulky or hazardous items.
- Compost yard trimmings and food scraps, while creating a natural, free fertilizer.



## Know Ohio's Open Burning Regulations

Open burning is any time you light an outdoor fire without a chimney or stack.

When burning releases harmful fumes or particles, 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 world by knowing the rules... which you can have in your back pocket.

Protect yourself, your neighbors and your world by knowing the rules... which you can have in your back pocket.