

Recreational Fires in Washington State

Requirements for recreational fires are defined both in International Fire Code and in WAC 173-425-050 (Washington Administrative Code). The elements of these two laws essentially boil down to the following:



DEFINITION

Recreational fires are outdoor burning of charcoal or firewood (not debris or rubbish) where the fuel is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbecue grill or barbecue pit¹. Recreational fires are for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes. **Fires used for debris or rubbish disposal are not considered recreational fires and are illegal.**

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance – Both WAC 173-425-050 and the International Fire Code mandate that recreational fires be constantly attended by a person capable of extinguishing the fire (alert, sober, awake) until the fire is extinguished. Extinguished is defined as all parts of the fire being out and cold. If unattended burning is reported to East Jefferson Fire Rescue, we will extinguish it and file a fire report. Other regulatory agencies may follow up unattended burning reports with hefty fines.

SIZE – The International Fire Code indicate that total fuel area for the fire may not exceed 3 feet in diameter or 2 feet in height.

Tools – The International Fire Code requires that the attendant must have approved fire extinguishing equipment on hand for immediate use. Such equipment includes large portable fire extinguisher (minimum 4A rating), shovels with sand or dirt, garden hose, water truck, or water barrel with buckets.

Location – WAC 173-425-050 requires that recreational fires must be at least fifty feet away from structures. The State's building code defines fences as structures, so imperiling your neighbor's fence would violate state law. International Fire Code indicates that conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition so make sure you have a good fuel break around the fire.

Permission - WAC 173-425-050 requires that permission from the landowner, or the owner's designated representative, must be obtained before starting a recreational fire.

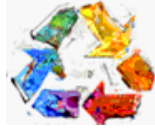
¹ A true barbecue pit is constructed to building code specifications. A fire in a hole dug in the ground does not constitute a barbecue pit under State law and would still be defined as a recreational fire.

To have an outdoor burn, you must follow certain guidelines which include limiting the size of the fire to 4'x4' and having a water source with a hose adjacent to the fire. You may only burn natural materials, no garbage or manmade items.



**OUTDOOR
BURNING
GUIDELINES
FOR
EAST JEFFERSON
COUNTY**

ALTERNATIVES TO OUTDOOR BURNING



Alpine Tree Service

Port Townsend 385-7293

Residential chipping, clearing brush & tree limbs

Brothers Tree Service

Port Townsend 385-0370

Residential chipping, clearing wood waste & brush

Dave's Tree Service

Nordland 385-2741

Mobile tree & stump grinding

Herman Brothers Log & Construction

Port Angeles 360-452-3341

Commercial stump & vegetative material grinding

Leavitt Trucking

Port Hadlock 385-4200

Commercial log & stump waste grinding/chipping

Olympic Tree Service

Port Ludlow 360-732-4941

Tree trimming, land clearing, & stump grinding

Town & Country Tree Service

Sequim 1-800-404-4256 or 385-1161

Residential chipping

Tree Works, Inc.

Port Orchard 1-800-726-6044

Residential tree trimming, chipping/cleanup

Jefferson County Waste Management Facility

Port Townsend 385-7908 or 385-3193

Composting facility accepts yard waste materials

Superior Refuse/Recycling

Port Townsend 385-6612

City curbside garbage & recycling services

Murrey's Olympic Disposal outside PT city limits

1-800-422-7854

Provides construction debris pickup boxes on request

OLYMPIC REGION CLEAN AIR AGENCY

(360) 586-1044 ♦ 1-800-422-5623

Website: <http://www.orcaa.org>

CONDITIONS FOR OUTDOOR DEBRIS DISPOSAL OPEN BURNING

NO debris disposal burning July thru August

Jefferson County Resolution #42-05

Additional curtailment periods:

If the DNR declares a MODERATE or HIGH fire danger index:

NO BURNING.

Burning is subject to immediate closure at any time for fire danger or air stagnation conditions as established by the Washington State Dept. of Ecology and/or Olympic Regional Clean Air Authority (ORCAA) per R.C.W. 70-94 and WAC 173-425.

NO OPEN BURNING WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF PORT TOWNSEND

Open burning periods are subject to the following:

- ◆ No burning in wind over 5 PMH or on foggy days.
- ◆ Burn pile must be at least 50 feet setback from any structure.
- ◆ Only one (1) 4x4x3 foot or smaller debris disposal fire is allowed at any time. Larger piles require ORCAA permit.
- ◆ Burn pile must be at least 500 feet from any forest slash areas.
- ◆ Burning is allowed from 8AM to 4PM: Do not add any fuel to fire after 3PM.
- ◆ A responsible person shall remain in attendance with the fire at all times.
- ◆ Burn only in accordance with local homeowner association disposal burning regulations.
- ◆ A shovel, charged garden hose & nozzle shall be on site.
- ◆ Fires should be worked to keep the fire burning hot to reduce smoke output.
- ◆ Fires creating excessive smoke &/or flying ash or a nuisance are subject to required extinguishment.
- ◆ Only natural vegetations may be burned, no processed wood of any type.
- ◆ Property owner/contractor assumes responsibility for damage to any structure, utility line/pole, tree/shrub, fence, road/right-of-way or other public/private edifice by smoke, flying ash or flame and accepts responsibility for any claimed adverse effects to the health of any person or persons in the path of said smoke/flying ash or flame.
- ◆ Violations will be investigated and penalties may be assessed for willful violation of these rules.
- ◆ Additionally, the Fire District may recover the costs incurred during response, control and extinguishments of an unlawful or out-of-control open burn.

Burn Barrel Information

Burn barrels are unhealthy and illegal. **You could be fined if you choose to burn in a burn barrel.** Burning common household trash in a burn barrel, incinerator or open fire produces a black, foul-smelling smoke that irritates the eyes, nose and throat. Burning trash in open fires or household incinerators creates low temperature fires which release toxic substances from plastics, inks, foils and other packaging materials into the air.

You can be fined up to \$10,000 per day for each violation. You can also be held responsible for the cost of putting out the fire. This can cost thousands of dollars.