

Burning of Building Materials

Air quality and solid waste regulations prohibit open burning of construction and demolition waste. Chemically treated lumber as well as synthetic and painted building material contains high concentrations of hazardous compounds that produce toxic emissions when burned.

Burning of Buildings

Structures to be demolished by intentional burning are subject to State and Federal regulations. Michigan air quality regulations only allow buildings to be intentionally burned for the purpose of fire department training.



Federal law requires that all asbestos be removed from any building (residential and non-residential) prior to authorized burning and that the NESHAP Asbestos Coordinator be notified 10 days prior the burn. For a notification form and more information, fire officials can call (517) 335-4639 or visit the Internet site: www.michigan.gov/deq and search keyword "asbestos".

Campfires

Air quality regulations allow the burning of logs, brush, charcoal and other similar materials for the purpose of food preparation or recreation, unless prohibited by local laws.



Burning of Beekeeping Equipment

Air quality regulations allow the burning of beekeeping equipment and products for the purpose of disease control, unless prohibited by local laws.

Open Burning Alternatives

Composting yard waste and using leaves and grass clippings for mulch are alternatives to open burning of yard waste. Composting produces valuable soil fertilizer through the natural process of decomposition. Compost piles are simple to begin and maintain, and take up relatively little space. For more information on composting at home, contact your county Michigan State University Extension Office.



Contact local programs about recycling of plastics, cardboard, paper, metals, etc. in your area. Donate reusable items to charitable organizations, families, or friends. Dispose of unwanted items in a licensed landfill or incinerator instead of open burning.



AIR QUALITY DIVISION
PO BOX 30260
LANSING, MI 48909
517-373-7023

For more information regarding the regulation of open burning in Michigan, please contact the DEQ Environmental Assistance Center (EAC) at 1-800-662-9278 or go to the DEQ website at: www.michigan.gov/deqair. Open burning material is located under 'Spotlight'.

In the event of a Pollution Emergency call:
1-800-292-4706

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Open Burning Regulations in Michigan



What is Open Burning?

"Open burning" is the burning of unwanted materials, such as paper, trees, brush, leaves, grass and other debris, where smoke and other emissions are released directly into the air. During open burning air pollutants do not pass through a chimney or stack, and/or combustion of solid waste is inadequately controlled.

Open burning pollutes the air and poses a forest fire hazard. The air pollution created by open burning can irritate eyes and lungs, obscure visibility, soil nearby surfaces, create annoying odors or pose other nuisance or health threats.

Because of the problems created by this activity, state and local laws prohibit open burning of many materials. Many people are either unaware of the regulations or unsure about which regulations apply to them. The following information will help identify the problems, regulations, sources of information, and alternatives to open burning.

DEQ Air Quality Division
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor Steven E. Chester, Director

Statewide Open Burning Laws

In Michigan, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Act 451 of 1994), Parts 55 regarding Air Pollution Control, 115 regarding Solid Waste Management and 515 regarding Forest Fire Prevention along with rules associated with the act regulate open burning.

In addition to state laws, local units of government, such as city, county or township boards, often regulate open burning through local laws. Local open burning laws take precedence over state regulations only if they are more restrictive than state regulations.

The easiest way to review state open burning regulations is to review them by type of material to be burned. Some of the most common burning materials are outlined below, along with the pertinent regulations.

General Open Burning

Michigan air quality and solid waste regulations prohibit open burning that creates smoke or odor nuisances.



Forest fire prevention regulations require persons to obtain permits to conduct open burning when the ground is not snow-covered. Burning permits do not allow burning prohibited by other regulations.

In the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula, burning permits may be obtained from the local DNR office or US Forest Service office. In the southern Lower Peninsula, burning permits may be obtained from the local fire department or local governing body.

If you have a question regarding burning permits, please contact the DNR Forest, Mineral & Fire Management Division, PO Box 30452, Lansing, MI 48909-7952, telephone number (231) 775-9727 ext.6051; or visit their website at: www.michigan.gov/dnr. Select "forests, land & water", then "forest management" followed by "fire management" from the left hand menu.

Many local communities prohibit open burning of any kind. Check with your local governing body before conducting open burning.

NOTICE TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO BURN:

You are responsible for any fire, smoke, or odors created from open burning ... and for any damage that results from your fire.

Burning of Trash

Persons may burn trash from and at a family dwelling in an approved container located on their own property, as long as they do not violate any other air pollution rules (such as those limiting smoke and smells). An approved container is one constructed of metal or masonry with a metal covering device with openings no larger than 3/4 inch.

A brochure titled "Burning Household Waste" describes the various pollutants emitted from burn barrels and related health effects. It is available from the DEQ, or you can obtain a copy via the "AIR" page on the DEQ website at www.michigan.gov/degair. Scroll down to "Air Publications" under Spotlight.

You should also be aware that many local communities prohibit burning of household waste; check with your local governing body before conducting open burning.

Burning of Grass Clippings and Leaves

Back in 1988, Michigan's Air Commission adopted a resolution urging Michigan townships, municipalities, counties, and other local units of government to ban the open burning of leaves.



Since 1995, solid waste regulations have prohibited the open burning of grass clippings and leaves in municipalities having a population of 7500 or more, unless the local governing body has specifically enacted an ordinance authorizing it.

Local governing bodies may enact ordinances authorizing such open burning provided other burning regulations are not violated. They are required to submit a copy of the ordinance to the Michigan DEQ Waste and Hazardous Materials Division, Solid Waste Program, PO Box 30241, Lansing, MI 48909.

Burning of Brush and Trees

According to air quality regulations, brush and trees may not be burned in portions of Bay, Calhoun, Delta, Genesee, Lapeer, Macomb, Manistee, Midland, Monroe, Muskegon, Saginaw, St. Clair and Wayne Counties.



Air quality regulations state that open burning of brush and trees must be conducted further than 1400 feet from the boundary of an incorporated city or village and may not violate other air pollution rules.

Local laws may prohibit open burning of brush and trees; check with your local governing body before conducting open burning.