



HARVARD FIRE DEPARTMENT



OPEN BURNING INFORMATION

Rules for Open Burning

- Open burning season runs from **January 15th thru May 1st**.
- Open burning is allowed only between the hours of **10 am** and **4 pm**.
- All fires need to be **completely** out by 4:00 pm.
- Call **(351) 333-5090** to activate your permit daily between 8:00 am – 12 pm for authorization to burn. No activations allowed after 12:00 pm.
- The fire must be **attended** by an adult **at all times** until completely extinguished.
- The person conducting the fire must have the Burning Permit with them.
- Open burning must be a minimum of 75 feet from all buildings.
- The person conducting the open burning must have a water supply established before and during the burning. The water supply can be a pressurized fire extinguisher, a pump can or garden hose. You must also have a rake or a shovel also.
- Open burning must take place on the land closest to the source of material to be burned, according to Department of Environmental Protection regulations (310 CMR DEP 7.07).
- People conducting illegal burning, or who allow a fire to get out of control, may be held liable for costs of extinguishing a fire, fined, and even imprisoned (MGL c.48 s.13).
- Violation of any of these rules is a reason to revoke your burning permit.

Open Burning, with a permit for the following materials are allowed:

- Brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris from other than commercial or industrial land clearing operations.
- Materials normally associated with the pursuit of agriculture such as fruit tree pruning's, dead raspberry stalks, blueberry patches for pruning purposes, and infected bee hives for disease control.
- Trees and brush resulting from agricultural land clearing.
- Fungus infected elm wood, if no other acceptable means of disposal is available.

Open Burning of the following materials is *prohibited* statewide:

- Brush, trees, cane and driftwood from commercial and/or industrial land clearing operations.
- Grass, hay, leaves and stumps, and tires.
- Construction material and debris.

For a complete list of the rules and regulations concerning open burning in Massachusetts please go to the DEP website: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-burning-safety>

Violation of any of these laws can result in a \$100 fine for the 1st offense, \$500 for the 2nd offense and \$1,000 for the 3rd and subsequent offense. On top of the fine you can be billed for the cost of the fire department response. Your permit may also be cancelled and if you do not have a permit you will not be allowed to purchase one in the future.

How to Safely Ignite the Fire

- Use paper and kindling to start a fire and add progressively larger pieces of wood. Parts of a leftover Christmas tree may also be used.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene or any other flammable liquid to start a fire! The risk of personal injury in these cases is very high.
- Burn one small pile at a time and slowly add to it. This will help keep the fire from getting out of control.
- Select a location away from utility lines.

Watch the Wind: Be Prepared to Extinguish All Open Burning

Weather conditions can change rapidly, especially in the spring, and fire wardens will determine on a daily basis when it is safe to conduct open burning. It is unsafe to burn during high winds. Use common sense and don't wait for the fire department to contact you that it has become unsafe to burn. Sudden wind change is how most open burning gets out of control. *If winds kick up or other atmospheric conditions change suddenly, making it unsafe to burn, permits can be rescinded.*

Don't Delay a Call for Help

If for some reason, the fire should get out of control, call the fire department immediately at 911. Use the utmost caution to prevent injury to yourself or family members or any damage by fire to your home.

April is the Cruellest Month

April is usually the worst month for brush fires. When snow pack recedes, before new growth emerges, last year's dead grass, leaves and wood are dangerous tinder. Winds also tend to be stronger and more unpredictable during April. Unfortunately many people wait until the warmer weather to conduct open burning.

Prevent Wildfires by Burning During Wet Snowy Conditions

Prevent permit fires from becoming wild land fires by burning early in the season. Wet and snowy winter conditions hinder the rapid spread of fire on or under the ground. Weather conditions and increased fire danger may lead to many days when burning cannot be allowed to take place.

You can go to the Mass DEP website to see the current Air Quality for our area.

<http://public.dep.state.ma.us/MassAir/Pages/MapForecast.aspx>

All proceeds from the Open Burning Permit fees go towards funding
the Harvard Fire Department S.A.F.E. program.
(Student Awareness of Fire Education)