



Montgomery County  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of Environmental Policy and Compliance



## *Requirements for Recreational Burning in Montgomery County*

These requirements are based on Montgomery County Code, Chapter 3 and the Code of Maryland Regulations; 26.11.07.

### **What is Open Burning?**

1. Open burning is defined as a fire where any material is burned on the ground or in an open receptacle. Open burning is prohibited in Montgomery County without a permit and fines of \$500 per day may be imposed for non-permitted open burning.
2. Exceptions to the prohibition on open burning are fires for cooking of food, on other than commercial premises, and open fires for recreational purposes such as campfires or bonfires.

### **What can you burn in a recreational fire?**

1. Only dry, aged wood and brush may be burned in a recreational fire. It is prohibited to burn ordinary household waste, construction debris, lumber, leaves, and materials which produce dense smoke when burned, including, but not limited to tires and roofing materials.

### **What conditions must be met for recreational fires on the ground?**

1. Recreational fires must not be larger than 3 feet in diameter or create a nuisance condition or produce dense smoke (visible emissions that exceed 20% opacity for a total of more than 3 minutes in any 60 minute period). **In order to prevent nuisance conditions, the Department recommends:**
  - fires not be located closer than 300 feet from any neighboring habitable dwelling
  - the ground around the material to be burned be cleared to prevent fires from spreading
  - the fire not be located near tall grass or tree lines
  - fire extinguishing equipment, including sufficient water, be readily available on the site
  - a fire supervisor, 18 years of age or older, be within direct view of the fire at all times
2. You may not burn if winds are forecasted to be greater than 12 mph for your ZIP Code area as reported by the NOAA National Weather Service Forecast at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>, or if there is an air pollution episode (code orange or red air quality days).
3. Prior to ignition of the fire, you must notify the Department of Fire and Rescue Services at their non-emergency number, 240-683-6520, of your intent to burn.

**Conditions that must be met for recreational fires in an open receptacle (Fire Pit, Fire Bowl, Chiminea, etc.) are listed on the back page of this document.**

### **What should I do if I do not meet the requirements to have a recreational fire?**

1. Compost your leaves and yard trimmings.
2. Haul the materials to the County's Solid Waste Transfer Station or Poolesville "Beauty Spot."
3. Use the County-wide recycling for curbside collection of brush and organic yard debris.
4. Call 311 for information on options to dispose of natural wood waste, brush, leaves and organic yard debris.