

OPENING BURNING – ‘09 REQUIREMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Open burning, the burning of any material out-of-doors, releases large amounts of carbon monoxide and other gaseous and solid substances directly into the atmosphere. Open burning causes air pollution and aggravates respiratory problems. Under poor atmospheric conditions, open burning creates a smoke and odor nuisance – as well as a health threat to area residents, especially in densely populated areas. For these reasons, open burning is restricted in Massachusetts.

Open burning must be conducted:

- during periods of good atmospheric ventilation (consult DEP’s regional office in Lakeland 508 946-2700)
- without causing a nuisance
- with a smoke minimizing starter, if used

You must obtain a **PERMIT** for open burning from your local fire department or fire warden.

Open burning hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Permission to commence burning after 1:00 p.m. will not be granted.

The only times a permit is not necessary are:

- To combat or backfire an existing fire by persons affiliated with an official firefighting agency.
- For cooking purposes.

Burning (**with a permit**) of the following materials is allowed:

Brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris from other than commercial or industrial land clearing operations between January 15 and May 1 under the following conditions:

- Burning must be at least 75’ from all dwellings, burning must be carried out between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and burning must take place on land closest to the source of material to be burned.
- Materials normally associated with the pursuit of agriculture such as; fruit tree pruning, dead raspberry stalks, blueberry patches for pruning purposes, infected beehives for disease control, trees and brush resulting from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected Elmwood, if no other acceptable means of disposal is available (disease-free brush is not an acceptable starting aid).

Suggested Guidelines for Conducting Open Burning

Starting the Fire

Before placing materials to be burned in an area, remove all grass. Before burning brush, dry by cutting in advance or covering. Start the fire using either small amounts of kerosene, #2 fuel or a pressurized burner which uses diesel fuel. **(NO GASOLINE)**

While Burning

Someone must attend the fire until completely extinguished. Have an available water supply such as a pressurized water pump, can or hose, and shovels or rakes for controlling the fire.

Extinguishing the Fire

Burn the fire down to coals and spread the coals with snow, water, sand or soil.

All open burning must be conducted during periods of good atmospheric ventilation “without causing a nuisance”, as determined by DEP.

NO OPEN BURING PERMITS MAY BE ISSUED for the burning of brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris in the following communities:

Arlington	Lowell
Belmont	Malden
Boston	Medford
Brookline	New Bedford
Cambridge	Newton
Chelsea	Somerville
Chicopee	Springfield
Everett	Waltham
Fall River	Watertown
Holyoke	West Springfield
Lawrence	Worcester

Permits are also required for the following activities:

- Training or research in fire protection or prevention with specific approval by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- Burning of Christmas trees from December 26 to January 7 of each year.
- One ceremonial bonfire each year to observe a municipal, state, or national event, under the supervision of the fire department.
- Bonfires between July 2 and July 6, under supervision of the fire department.

Burning of the following material is PROHIBITED statewide.

- Brush, trees, cane, and driftwood from commercial and/or institutional land clearing operations
- Grass, hay, leaves, stumps and tires.
- Burning at landfills or refuse disposal facilities other than approved sites.
- Stacking, placing or storing combustible materials such that the Department may presume that it will be burned.

**REMEMBER
OPEN BURNING CAUSES AIR POLLUTION**