

Tips for Safe Debris Burning

- **Comply with Local Regulations:**
Contact your local fire department in advance to confirm that burning is allowed and to find out whether a permit is required to burn debris.
- **Check the Weather Forecast**
Weather fluctuations, such as sudden gusts of wind, could make debris burning spark a wildfire. Call your local fire department the day you plan to burn debris to finalize that the weather is safe enough to burn.
- **Choose a Safe Burning Site**
A safe site will be far away from power lines, overhanging limbs, buildings, automobiles, and equipment. It will have vertical clearance at least three times the height of the pile, as heat from the fire extends far past the actual flames that you see. It will have horizontal clearance twice the height of the debris pile.
- **Prepare the Site Correctly:**
The ground around the burn site should be surrounded by gravel or mineral soil (dirt) for at least ten feet in all directions. Keep the surrounding area watered down during the burn.
- **If using a Burn Barrel, Make Sure it is Equipped with the Proper Features**
Burn Barrels must be made of all-metal construction in good condition (no rust on the sides or bottom) and properly ventilated with three evenly-spaced, three-inch square vents spaced evenly around the rim near ground level. Each vent must be backed by a metal screen. A Burn Barrel must have a metal top screen with mesh size of one-fourth inch or finer to keep sparks from escaping and potentially sparking a wildfire. When burning, layer the different types of debris and stir often. Be careful of sparks escaping the barrel when you stir it.
- **Remain With your Fire**
Stay with your fire until it is completely out. To ensure the fire has been completely extinguished, drown the fire with water, turn over the ashes with a shovel and drown it again. Repeat several times. Check the burn area regularly over the next several days and up to several weeks following the burn, especially if the weather is warm, dry, and windy.
- **Keep it Legal**
It is illegal to burn plastic, tires, and most other waste products not from a tree or shrub.