
What About Other Kinds of Burning?

This Air Pollution Control District has separate requirements and guidelines designed to accommodate farmers, ranchers, homeowners, and others who need to burn vegetation. These types of burns include agricultural waste burns, backyard burns, forest management burns, prescribed burns, range improvement burns, wildland vegetation management burns, and residential yard-waste burns. Please contact the District's Compliance Division at 647-9411 for information on these other types of burning.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
Compliance Division
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-9411 (phone)
(831) 647-8501 (FAX)
<http://www.mbuapcd.org> (District Web site)

Daily Burn Day Status Hotline (800) CAL-BURN
..... or (800) 225-2876

ARB Forecast Line (916) 322-6014

Guidelines for Burning Woody Wastes from Development

("Development Burns")

in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties



Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940

What are “Woody Wastes from Development” and “Development Burning”?

“Woody waste from development” are from natural vegetation grown on the property being developed for commercial or residential purposes. The use of outdoor fires for disposing of woody wastes from development is often called “development burning”.

What are Alternatives to Burning?

Because burning can release a substantial amount of air pollution, the Air Pollution Control District encourages everyone to use alternative methods to dispose of woody waste when feasible. These include composting, chipping or taking woody waste to landfills where the material is diverted to make mulch or transported to facilities that burn woody waste to generate electricity. Some landfills in the area accept woody waste at a much lower disposal fee than regular garbage.

Who May Conduct Development Burning?

You may be able to conduct development burning, if you are clearing woody wastes from land being developed for commercial or residential purposes. The woody wastes must have resulted from trees, vines, or bushes or other natural vegetation grown on the land being developed. Also, your local fire jurisdiction must allow development burning. You must have a valid permit to conduct development burning from the Air Pollution Control District, and may need an additional permit from your local fire agency.

What Can I Burn?

If you have followed the guidelines contained in this pamphlet completely, you may be allowed to burn on your property woody waste that was grown on that property being developed for commercial or residential purposes.

What is a Burn Day?

Burn days are designated by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). Each day the ARB examines weather patterns to predict whether the smoke from fires will dissipate safely. If the answer is yes, the ARB declares that day a burn day.

Whom do I Contact to be Able to Burn?

Contact the Air Pollution Control District to obtain a seasonal permit for development burning and to receive authorization for the size and number of burn piles that can be burned on your property safely each ARB-declared burn day. Contact your local fire department to find out what other restrictions may be imposed by your local fire agency for development burning.

When May I Burn?

- Development burning is allowed only on burn days between December 1 and April 30.
- The hours during which you may burn may depend on your local fire agency.
- Call 1-800-CAL-BURN to learn if it's a burn day. The declarations for the next day are usually posted by 4 P.M. the previous day.

How Can I Reduce Smoke?

These guidelines will help you to burn while reducing the smoke's impact on your neighbors.

- ▶ Avoid creating a public nuisance and being cited and fined by extinguishing your fire immediately if the smoke from your fire begins to affect your neighbors or nearby roads.
- ▶ The vegetation must be free from waste such as garbage, plastic, painted or treated lumber, tires, tar paper, demolition debris, etc. Try to avoid burning poison oak.
- ▶ To avoid smoldering fires, the material to be burned must be reasonably free of dirt and soil and visible surface moisture. Stack the material loosely to allow air to circulate freely.
- ▶ After rain, if the material to be burned is wet, allow the pile to dry before burning. Covering dried materials can prevent this delay.
- ▶ Avoid burning leaves and other small material which can become tightly compacted, retain moisture, and smolder when burning. This type of material can easily be disposed of in your weekly garbage pick-up. Check with your disposal service for yard waste pick-up.
- ▶ When possible, light the pile on the downwind side. This allows the material to burn more thoroughly and gives better control of the fire.
- ▶ Tree stumps six inches or larger in diameter must dry at least 180 days before burning.
- ▶ Trees and branches two inches or greater in diameter, but less than six inches must be dried for at least 60 days before burning.
- ▶ Trees and branches less than two inches in diameter and plant trimmings must be dried for at least 30 days before burning.