



## **Chelan Fire and Rescue**

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### **Chelan County Burn Ban Information**

#### **What is outdoor burning?**

Outdoor burning of house hold yard waste, such as leaves, grass, brush and

Other yard trimmings: It is also burning to clear land of trees, stumps, shrubbery, or other natural vegetation.

#### **What changed in 2007?**

Before 2007, outdoor burning only in urban growth areas for cities with more than 5,000 people. Starting January 1, 2007, outdoor burning is banned in all urban growth areas in Washington.

#### **Are garbage burning and burn barrels banned?**

Garbage burning and burn barrels are illegal everywhere in Washington, and have been for many years.

#### **\*What is an urban growth area?**

“Urban growth area” is a term used by cities and counties to define where homes and business development is allowed. More development is allowed inside an urban growth area. For example, four houses per acre might be allowed in the urban growth area, while only one house per five acres might be allowed outside the area.

How will I Know if I am in an urban growth area?

To find out if you live in an urban growth area, call your local planning department.

Maps of urban growth areas around the state are also on Ecology’s web site at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/porgams/air/aginfo/ugamaps.htm>

**If I'm not in an urban growth area, can I still burn?**

Each area has its own rules. Check with your local building department or county planning department to learn what is allowed in your area. All burning requires a permit.

**If I can't burn, what should I do with all my yard waste?**

Call your local solid waste department to find out what options are available to you. Instead of burning, you could:

- Compost
- Chip
- Use curbside pickup
- Haul to yard waste disposal stations
- Hold community –wide or neighborhood cleanup days

**What if my community doesn't have any alternatives to burning?**

Call your solid waste department to find out where you can take your yard waste until other options are available. If the 2007 legislature gives Ecology special funding your county solid waste departments will be able to apply to Ecology for a Coordinated Prevention Grant (CPG) to buy chippers, help haul yard waste, or pay for other alternatives to burning. This money is a one-time grant to help communities start alternatives to burning. In the long-term, communities are responsible to pay for their own programs.

**Why can't I burn?**

Outdoor burning can harm health, the environment, and property:

- Burning pollutes the air, causing serious health problems. The smoke from burning leaves, grass, brush, and trees needles can cause asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and lung cancer. Children, the elderly, and those with breathing problems are most harmed by poor air quality.
- Burning also pollutes our water and soil. Smoke particles fall into our water and on our soil.
- Back yard fire can destroy property. Back yard fire that get out of control set off most of the wildfires caused by people. You can be held responsible for the cost of putting out your out-of-control fire, which can be very expensive.

**What happens if I keep burning?**

You can be fined up to 10,000 per day for each violation. You can be held responsible for the cost of putting out the fire. This can cost thousands of dollars.

**If the law was passed in 1991, why am I just hearing about it?**

Lawmakers voted to phase in the ban on residential outdoor burning to give communities more time to develop alternatives to burning. The ban was originally set to take effect state wide in 2001. It took effect only in communities with 5,000 or more people in 2001. In 1998, the Legislature delayed the ban for smaller communities until January 1, 2007, to give them even more time to pursue.

**If I live in a small town, is smoke really a problem?**

Smoke causes the same health problems no matter where you live. Sources of smoke may be different from place to place. Smoke can affect the lung, sting the eyes, and worsen heart and lung disease.

**Doesn't smoke just blow away?**

Sometimes it does, it depends on weather and geography. For example, if you live in a valley, smoke settles after sunset when cool air drops down from higher elevations. This cool, dense air carries smoke from outdoor fires and woodstoves, and accumulates near valley bottom.

Although some smoke may escape through valley openings or gaps and spread to another area, most of the smoke remains trapped until the sun has warmed the ground. Then, the warm air rises and may carry the smoke out of the valley.

In the winter, the days rarely warm up enough to carry away the smoke, and more smoke gets added each day. Even on summer nights, smoke can reach unhealthy levels before being cleared out the following day.

**What kinds of burning are still allowed?**

Farm and orchard burning (with a permit) and campfires are still allowed. The U.S. Forest Service is still allowed to do forest burning.

**Why are farm and orchard burning still allowed?**

The Legislature decided to allow farm and orchard burning under certain conditions. Ecology issues burn permits to farmers and orchardists based on the reason for burning, the weather conditions, and the effects of the smoke on nearby people. Ecology gives advance notice about when burns will happen.

**Why is forest burning still allowed?**

Forest burning is allowed because it helps keep our forest healthy. However, it is done under strict guidelines. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources issues permits for U. S. Forest Service Burns. They work together using weather information to make good burning decisions.

**Who should I call if someone is burning and they're not supposed to?**

Call the number listed for your county, below.

Chelan Department of Ecology, 509-575-2490 or 1-866-211-6284

Douglas Department of Ecology, 509-575-2490 or 1-866-2111-6284

**If you are having trouble breathing or if smoke from an outdoor burn is getting into your house, call 911 immediate help.**

More information is on Ecology's web site at;

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/outdoor\\_woodsmoke/residentialburn.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/outdoor_woodsmoke/residentialburn.htm)