



## COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Things You Should Know About Outdoor Burning

#### **RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR BURNING It Is Our Responsibility to Know**

As residents of Yakima County, we all take pride in our natural surroundings. But one part — the air we breathe — are being threatened. In 1993 Washington State produced 3,000,000 tons of air pollution. Outdoor burning accounted for more than 10% of that figure. Pollution that is generated from outdoor burning poses a serious threat to Yakima residents and the environment in which we live.

In 1991, our state legislature passed The Washington Clean Air Act, a law that addresses many of Washington's air pollution problems. The Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency (YRCAA), in an effort to educate and inform, produced this brochure which outlines the YRCAA open burning regulation. Complying with these regulations will clearly benefit us all.

#### **WHO CAN BURN AND WHERE CAN A PERMIT BE OBTAINED?**

All residential burning is banned inside the Yakima Urban Growth Areas of all the incorporated cities in Yakima County. Burning in all other residential areas is permitted with a burn permit issued by the Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency at its office or through its agents. Questions regarding boundaries of non-burning and burning areas may be directed to the Clean Air Agency. There are permit agents in the lower and upper valley issuing residential open burning permits for the Agency. The residential open burning permit generally requires a fee but the actual fee may vary depending upon the agent's surcharge or fee amount. Call the Clean Air Agency at 834-2050 for information on the permit agent nearest you.

The Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency issues agricultural burn permits. Permit fees are based on an established fee schedule. Silvicultural burning (burning related to forest management) requires a permit from Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Special permits may be issued by the Clean Air Agency for weed abatement, land clearing, or for situations that call for burning as the only method available to eliminate a hazard.

No permit is required for recreational burning (barbecues and campfires); burning a ritual or ceremonial fire does require permission from YRCAA, as certain restrictions apply. However, any fire that becomes a nuisance is unlawful.



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### **WHEN CAN RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR BURNING OCCUR? PERMITS AVAILABLE MARCH 15<sup>TH</sup> TO OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup>**

Optimum weather conditions for open burning are characterized by sufficient air movement which allows for quick dispersion of the smoke that is produced. During periods of limited air movement or stagnation, smoke and carbon monoxide can become trapped close to the ground. During these stagnant periods, air quality officials may declare Air Pollution Episodes or Air Quality Impairments, programs which are designed to protect the public from unhealthy levels of air pollution. Episodes are carried out by the Washington State Department of Ecology and generally restrict only outdoor burning.

The Clean Air Agency may declare air impairments which prohibit all outdoor and indoor burning. Weather conditions that may require a burn ban to go into effect generally occur in the fall and winter months.

The County Fire Marshal may impose a ban on all outdoor burning. Updated information on burning conditions is available by calling the 24-hour office line at (509) 834-2050.

### **WHAT MATERIALS CAN BE BURNED?**

Only natural vegetation native to the site, such as leaves, stumps, brush, etc. may be burned. State law prohibits the burning of paper, garbage, dead animals, asphalt, petroleum products, paints, rubber products, plastics, cardboard, treated wood, construction debris, metal or any other substance which when burned produces dense smoke, toxic emissions, or odors.

### **ARE THERE ANY ALTERNATIVES TO OUTDOOR BURNING?**

Yes. Composting is an easy and inexpensive way to turn yard and wood waste into a usable and valuable product. Compost returns the organic matter to the soil to be used by plants rather than burning it and creating an environmental hazard. Yard wastes may be turned into compost at home in special bins or taken to the Yakima County Landfill composting locations.

Other alternatives include creating a landscape that requires less maintenance and produces less waste, taking yard wastes to a chipping business or renting a chipper and tilling yard waste back into the soil.

To learn more about composting, attend a no-cost Master Composter Class offered through the Yakima County Solid Waste Department, telephone number 574-2450.



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### ARE THERE ANY RULES OR REGULATIONS THAT APPLY TO RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR BURNING?

Yes. The following rules apply to residential open burning to ensure proper and safe burning:

- ✓ The fire must not include prohibited materials.
- ✓ The fire must be attended at all times.
- ✓ Burning must not occur between sunset and dawn.
- ✓ The fire must be at a distance of at least fifty feet from any structure.
- ✓ The pile must be no larger than four feet in diameter and three feet high.
- ✓ Only one pile may be burned at any given time.
- ✓ No burning may occur within five hundred feet of forest slash without a written burning permit.
- ✓ If the fire creates a nuisance, it must be extinguished immediately.
- ✓ Permission from a landowner, or owner's designated representative, must be obtained before starting an open fire.
- ✓ The Yakima Clean Air Agency or local Fire Department of the area must be notified for burning conditions prior to igniting the open fire.

Failure to comply with these regulations is punishable by law.

### BURN BARRELS:

The use of burn barrels is prohibited in Washington State. For more information go to <http://www.burnbarrel.org>

### THE BURNING QUESTION:

### HOW CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR BURNING?

Further information about residential and other outdoor burning may be obtained by calling or by writing:

Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency  
186 Iron Horse Court.  
Suite 101  
Yakima, WA 98901-2303

Burn Information: 834-2050

For information regarding burning on property located within the external boundaries of the Yakama Indian Reservation, call: 509-865-5121 Ext. 6038