



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

www.smchd.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEARN BEFORE YOU BURN

LEONARDTOWN, MD (February 23, 2006) – St. Mary's County Health Department is reminding local residents and businesses to take time out to learn the facts about conducting safe and healthy open burning *before* the fire is lit. Air quality regulations dictate the practice of open burning in the county.

"We are advising local residents to learn before they burn, so that they know the process for obtaining a burning permit and the rules pertaining to safe set back distances for fires," explained Ann Rose, environmental sanitarian at the health department. Several types of open fires require a permit, and while leaf burns and other small fires may not, minimum set back distances of 200 feet in most areas, and 500 feet in the Development District are necessary. Maryland state regulations about what types of fires require permits are available at www.dsd.md.us/comar.

Permits may be obtained locally through the St. Mary's County Health Department Environmental Health Services office, or on the web at www.smchd.org. A 30 day permit costs \$20. In some cases a permit from the Maryland Forestry Service is also required. To learn if you need this additional permit, call 301-475-8551.

All burns, whether they require permits or not, need to be reported to the St. Mary's County Control Center before the fire is lit to prevent unnecessary 911 dispatches. Call 301-475-8016 to make this report.

For more information about open burning and permits, you may call the health department at 301-475-4321 or you may visit the website at www.smchd.org. Click on Services to select the Environmental Health division pathway for a burning permits fact sheet and applications for open burning.

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