



Burning Permits

Fact Sheet

WHO NEEDS A BURNING PERMIT?

Several types of open fires require a permit. Maryland regulations define an "open fire" as *a fire where any material is burned in the open or in a receptacle other than a furnace, incinerator, or other equipment connected to a stack or chimney*.^{*} While some open fires like leaf burns and campfires do not require official permits, they may not cause a public nuisance and leaf burns must be located at least 200 feet from the nearest inhabited structure. To find Maryland state regulations about what kinds of fires require permits, see www.dsd.state.md.us/comar.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR A BURNING PERMIT?

Permit applications are available through the St. Mary's County Health Department website: www.smchd.org or by visiting the Division of Environmental Health office. An application fee is charged. The permit, if granted will be valid for 30 days. The Health Department also asks for a site plan along with the permit application in order to better evaluate the conditions of the burn. In many cases, a permit from the Maryland Forestry Service is also required; to find out if you need this additional permit, call 301-880-2749.

AIR QUALITY REGULATIONS FOR OPEN BURNS

- No practical alternative for disposal is available.
- No hazardous condition, air pollution or nuisance is created.
- Regulations of other agencies are met.
- Materials burned do not create dense smoke.
- Materials burned originate on premises.
- A minimum distance of 200 feet from any habitable structure is maintained. Effective February 1, 2006, a minimum 500 feet distance from habitable structures and roads is required in the Development District.
- Permitted burn hours are observed: homeowner permit hours are from 6am-10pm; land development permit hours are from Monday at 6am to Friday at 6pm, continuous. (*Air Quality Index levels can affect burning hours. If the index increases to orange, burning is limited to after 6pm. Under a red index, no burning is allowed.*)

BEFORE YOU BURN- IMPORTANT!

Any burn, whether it needs a permit or not, needs to be reported to the St. Mary's County Control Center before it is started. Call 301-475-8016 so that 911 operators do not dispatch fire crews.

For more information:

- St. Mary's County Health Department: Environmental Health Division- 301-475-4321
- Maryland Forestry Service- 301-880-2749
- Maryland State Agency Regulations- www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/