

## What is the Law?

### State Law:

- Even where burning is permitted, everyone should try to reduce burning to the greatest extent possible.
- Smoke from your burn pile must not affect your neighbors. You must be in attendance and able to put the fire out at all times.

### San Juan County Law:

- Fire departments may issue burn permits under state law guidelines. Fire departments will inspect all burns before issuing a permit.
- No burning is allowed within the fire district without a valid permit, except for recreational fires or fires allowed under the authority of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Fire departments will charge a fee for land clearing or burn permits on lands within the fire district boundaries, except for DNR jurisdictions.
- The fire chief will appoint one or more fire wardens with authority to issue permits, suspend permits, and issue citations in San Juan County.
- You may be responsible for suppression costs if your fire escapes or requires suppression. Fire departments can take legal action to collect these costs.
- Burn permits are only issued from October 1 through June 30, depending on weather conditions.

## Why is Burning Restricted?

Even unprocessed natural vegetation such as lawn clippings, leaves and pine needles produce **air pollution** when burned. This includes **carbon monoxide** and **fine particulates**, which can have serious health effects.

Children, the elderly and those suffering from chronic respiratory conditions such as **asthma**, **emphysema** and **bronchitis** are the most vulnerable to poor air quality. Reducing air pollution is one way Ecology is working to decrease toxics in the environment.



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**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

### For more information:

**Washington Department of Ecology**  
*Northwest Regional Office*  
3190 160th Ave. S.E.,  
Bellevue, WA 98008-5452  
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/outdoor\\_woodsmoke/residentialburn.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/outdoor_woodsmoke/residentialburn.htm)

**Toll-free Air Quality and Smoke  
Complaint Line: 1-866-211-6284**

*If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Air Quality Program at 360-407-6800. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*

## Learn Before You Burn in San Juan County:

### How does the law affect you?

### A Resident's Guide to Outdoor Burning Regulations and Resources



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## What can I burn?

- In many areas, no residential burning is allowed. However, in some rural areas, you can burn yard and garden debris such as leaves and clippings. Piles must be no larger than 4 feet wide by 3 feet high and must be at least 50 feet away from structures. Piles larger than this require a burn permit.
- You can burn recreational fires such as campfires and barbeques. Only burn briquettes, propane, and bare, untreated, dry firewood.
- You can burn debris from land you own. This includes land clearing burning and pasture management, and you must have a permit to burn.

## When can I burn?

You can get a permit to burn October 1 through June 30, except for times when a burn ban has been called by either Ecology or your local fire department. You must **always** notify your local fire department when you are planning on burning.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUG	SEPT
OCT	NOV	DEC

## What can't I burn?

- You may not dispose of yard debris in a recreational fire.
- Burning ANYTHING in a burn barrel, including natural vegetation, is illegal. This is because a barrel limits the amount of oxygen that can get to a fire, which results in incomplete combustion and lots of smoke.
- It is illegal to do agricultural burning or land clearing burning without a permit.



*\* The Urban Growth Areas include the city limits and an area around each city. For more information about Urban Growth Areas, consult your local planning department.*

## What happens if I burn when I'm not supposed to?

You can be **fined up to \$10,000** per day, per violation! Illegal outdoor burning is one of the most common air quality violations. It pays to know the rules before you burn!

## Who can I call for help?

Washington State  
Department of Ecology  
David Adler  
(425) 649-7267

Washington State  
Department of Natural Resources  
1-800-527-3305

## Contact your local fire department before starting any outdoor fire:

- *San Juan Island:* (360) 378-5334
- *Orcas Island:* (360) 376-2331
- *Lopez Island:* (360) 468-2991
- *Shaw Island:* (360) 378-7880

