



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

## **Safe Debris Burning in Washington Forests**

Careless debris burning is the cause of many wildfires and nuisance smoke problems. Outdoor debris burning is subject to state and local fire safety and air quality regulations.

- Consider no-burn options. Many landfills offer designated days when yard debris can be disposed of at little or no cost. Your local Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service offers "how to" publications and advice about composting. On-site chipping may be feasible. Limbs and other debris may be piled for wildlife habitat if located where it does not pose a wildfire hazard.
- Check local regulations regarding permit requirements and "burn ban" restrictions. Burning is usually regulated by local fire departments. Burning in the undeveloped forested portion of your property is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Contact your local fire department for burning regulations in residential areas. In forested areas protected by DNR, debris burning is permitted without a written permit if all the following conditions are met:

- Burn one pile at a time of forest debris that is less than 4 feet in diameter (July 1 - October 15) or less than 10 feet in diameter (October 16 - June 30). (Exceptions: In Spokane, Island, King, Pierce, Kitsap, and San Juan counties, piles may not exceed 4 feet in diameter at any time of the year; piles may be up to ten feet in diameter at any time if the year in Clallam and Jefferson counties.)
- Burn only natural vegetation or untreated wood products.
- Burn piles are at least 50 feet from structures and 500 feet from any forest slash.
- Clear the area around the burn pile of any flammable debris.
- The winds are calm or light. It is too windy to burn if trees are swaying, flags are extended, or waves appear on open water.
- Maintain a connected water hose or at least five gallons of water and a shovel nearby.
- Attend the fire until it is completely out.
- Be prepared to extinguish the fire if it becomes a nuisance.

- Call 1-800-323-BURN to obtain updated burning information on the day of the burn.

If any of these conditions cannot be met, a written burning permit is required. These conditions apply only to burning in areas regulated by DNR.

To obtain a written burning permit contact the DNR region office in your area ([DNR Region Offices](#)).

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