

CONTROLLED BURNS



We often get questions about controlled or planned burns. Landowners planning to burn brush or other vegetative waste should first contact the 9-1-1 Center using the non-emergency number: 717-334-8101 or 717-624-2101. We appreciate knowing about these ‘burns’ so that we don’t dispatch the local fire department (unless they’re needed of course).

The dispatchers will give them advice on tending the fire and making sure that it is out before dark. And remember, always use caution and be careful when burning in municipalities where it is permitted. Some townships prohibit any type of burning. It is the property owner's responsibility to check with their township or municipality to ensure their proposed burn is legal.

State law prohibits burning without a permit. One exemption is the burning of domestic (residential) refuse by two families or fewer occupying the same dwelling. Domestic refuse must be burned in a container with an approved cover. Refuse does not include furniture, mattresses, tires, construction debris, appliances, etc. These items may not be burned under the refuse exemption.

Also, in Pennsylvania, there is a regulation prohibiting “malodors” from activities other than agriculture, as well as a prohibition for smoke crossing over property boundaries.

Try to avoid windy days and use caution particularly when conditions are dry. Keep a hose nearby and use a container covered with a grate (spark and ember screen).

[A Home in the Country-Life in Adams County \(PSU\)](#) [Pennsylvania State Code](#)

OPEN BURNING

(Excerpted from Adams County Burn Ordinance No. 4 of 1993)

V. OPEN BURNINGS

A. No person or persons, corporation, partnership or association shall burn, or permit to be burned, a structure of any size, or burn, or permit to be burned, any material outside of a container with an approved cover, within Adams County, Pennsylvania, unless the following regulations and restrictions, which are hereby established, as well as any and all pertinent rules and regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, are strictly observed and adhered to:

1. Any person or persons, corporation, partnership or association wishing to conduct an open burning(s) shall first notify the Adams County Emergency 9-1-1 Communications Center, via a non-emergency telephone number, to register any and all planned burnings prior to commencement of such burning. This burning registration shall include structure(s) of any size, or the planned burning of any material outside of an approved container, by the initiator(s) thereof, and the initiator(s) shall notify the Communications Center, indicating the proposed burning site (address), size and type of burning, the responsible party's name and telephone number; and

2. This above required notification process is for registration purposes only, and shall not to be considered a submission for approval, and at all times the person or persons, corporation, partnership who have reported such a burn, shall be fully responsible and/or held responsible for any unexpected outcome; i.e., any and all damages or injuries resulting therefrom; and

3. No planned burning shall be performed or permitted within less than fifty (50) feet from any building, structure of any type, forest or wooded area; and

4. All open, planned or controlled burnings shall commence after sunrise and shall be extinguished before sunset; no open, planned or controlled burnings shall commence before sunrise or continue after sunset; and

5. No open, planned or controlled burnings shall be performed or permitted, unless a person eighteen (18) years of age or older is present, at all times, to regulate and control such burning from the time such burning is ignited and commenced until the same is properly and finally extinguished.

B. Any open burnings of any structures or substances whatsoever within Adams County, Pennsylvania, which have been reported as a "Fire" and have not been registered with the County, as required by this Ordinance, and/or any open burnings of any structures or substances whatsoever within the County which have been reported "Out-of-Control", willingly or unwillingly, shall be subject to immediate extinguishment. All such extinguishments shall be subject to response cost reimbursement which shall be paid to the all responding agencies, as per the County cost recovery table, and/or any and all fines prescribed by this Ordinance, by the responsible party(ies). (see County Fire SOP, Section X, H, the provisions of which, as, from time to time amended, are hereby incorporated herein by reference).

C. The Adams County Fire Marshal is hereby authorized and directed to impose a "BAN" upon all open burnings of any structures or substances whatsoever within Adams County, Pennsylvania, when, from time to time, prevailing conditions and the interests of public safety mandate, in the judgment of such Fire Marshal, the imposition of such ban upon all open burning. Notice of the imposition and lifting of any such ban upon all open burning shall be announced by the Adams County Fire Marshal via announcements published in the Gettysburg Times, in the Hanover Evening sun, as well as broadcasts over radio stations WGET/WGTY and WHVR/WYCR.

D. Any Ordinance or Resolution, or any part of any Ordinance or Resolution, which is inconsistent with the contents of the present Ordinance shall be, and the same is hereby repealed insofar as the same is affected by or inconsistent with the provisions of the present Ordinance.

VI. Violations

Any person(s) or entity(ies) violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance, or neglecting to comply with any Order issued pursuant to any Section hereof, shall be guilty of a summary offense, and upon conviction shall pay a fine to the use of the County of Adams of not more than the maximum fine for a summary criminal offense, as established, from time to time, by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which statutes, as amended, are incorporated herein by reference together with the maximum term of imprisonment authorized or permitted pursuant to said statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in addition to, or in lieu of, or in default of, the payment of the aforesaid fine. Each violation of any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall constitute a separate offense; and, provided further, that each day during which a violator or violators neglect(s) to comply with any Order issued pursuant to any Section of this Ordinance shall likewise constitute a separate offense, punishable as aforesaid. In addition to the fines and penalties established as aforesaid, any person(s) or entity(ies) violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance or neglecting to comply with any Order issued pursuant to any Section hereof, shall be liable for the payment unto the County of Adams for restitution equal to all costs of prosecution, as well as all costs and expenses incurred by the Fire Marshal, the Fire Chiefs and the Fire Companies in the prosecution and enforcement of the present Ordinance.

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