

RECREATIONAL FIRES IN OAK HARBOR, WA and its Urban Growth Areas



Requirements for recreational fires are defined by both the International Fire Code (IFC) section 307 (adopted by Washington State and City of Oak Harbor) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-425-050.

DEFINITION

Recreational fires are outdoor burning of charcoal or firewood (not debris or rubbish) where the fuel is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, or barbecue grill. Recreational fires are for pleasure, religious or ceremonial, cooking, warmth, or similar purposes. Fires used for debris disposal are not considered recreational fires and are illegal.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance – by law, recreational fires must be constantly attended by a person capable of extinguishing the fire (alert, sober, awake) until the fire is extinguished. Extinguished is defined as all parts of the fire being out and cold. If unattended burning is reported to Oak Harbor Fire Department, we will extinguish the fire, a report will be filed, and fines may be levied. (WAC 173-425-050 and IFC 307)

Size – International Fire Code indicates a total fuel area for the fire may not exceed 3 feet in diameter or 2 feet in height.

Tools – a recreational fire attendant must have approved fire extinguishing equipment on hand for immediate use. Such equipment includes large portable fire extinguisher (minimum 4A rating), shovels with sand or dirt, a charged garden hose, or large barrel of water. (ICF 307)

Location – permanent fire pits must be no less than 25 feet away from structures or conditions which would cause a fire to spread (tall, dry grass, shrubs). The State's building code defines fences as structures, so imperiling your neighbor's fence would violate state law. A portable fire pit must be no less than 15 feet from structures.

Permission – WAC 173-425-050 requires that permission from the landowner, or the owner's designated representative, must be obtained before starting a recreational fire.

Discontinuance – if the fire department receives a complaint about a recreational fire that is negatively affecting neighboring properties, fire department personnel will request that the fire be extinguished. (WAC 173.400.040).

The Washington State Department of Ecology, Island County Sheriff, and local Air Pollution Control Authorities can ban outdoor burning, including recreational fires. For current outdoor burning restrictions in Island County, contact Northwest Clean Air Agency at (360) 428-1617, ext. 4.

Follow these rules to enjoy a safe recreational fire. For more information, please contact Paul Schroer, Fire Marshal at Oak Harbor Fire Department at (360) 279-4702; pschroer@oakharbor.org.

For a map of the City of Oak Harbor and its Urban Growth Areas, please visit:

<https://oakharbor.gov/DocumentCenter/View/470/Land-Use-Map-PDF>.

Additional information on outdoor burning is available at nwcleanair.gov and oakharbor.gov.