

OPEN BURNING

When Can We Burn?

Open burning is allowed between March 1 and August 31 throughout Montana, unless local regulations or fire danger restrictions prevent it. Conditional burning may be conducted between September 1 and November 30. Before burning in September, October and November, check the ventilation conditions by calling the ventilation hotline 1-800-225-6779. **No open burning is allowed during December, January and February.** All fires must be attended, water source or fire suppression must be present and available at the fire site.

Before burning, citizens must obtain a burn permit. Residents may obtain a permit by: using the internet, go to www.burnpermits.mt.gov (takes approximately four minutes to obtain). Or by responding to the Ravalli County Sheriff's Office Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday between 1-4 p.m. Any questions can be answered by reviewing the Burn Permit information at Ravalli County Sheriff's Office web page, Ravalli County Sheriff's Office Facebook page, by contacting the Ravalli County Dispatch Center at 363-3033, by contacting Lt. Zae Hudson (375-4020), or contacting your local Fire Chief. Burn permits are free and are valid for the entire burn season (March 1st – November 30th). You must activate the burn permit for each day that you will burn. You may activate a burn permit by responding to the www.burnpermits.mt.gov site or by calling 1-866-212-6318. If you experience technical difficulties, you may contact the Ravalli County Dispatch Center at 363-3033, by contacting Lt. Zae Hudson 375-4020.

What Can Be Burned?

A good rule-of-thumb is the only material that can be legally burned is wood waste from trees, shrubs and plants originating on the property and clean, untreated wood generated on the property.

The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) prohibits the disposal of any material by open burning listed in ARM 17.8.604, which includes but is not limited to: food wastes, styrofoam and other plastics, wastes generating noxious odors, wood and wood byproducts that have been coated, painted, stained, treated, or contaminated by a foreign material, poultry litter, animal droppings, dead animals or dead animal parts, tires, rubber materials, asphalt shingles, tar paper, automobile or aircraft bodies and interiors, insulated wire, oil and petroleum products, treated lumber and timbers, pathogenic wastes, hazardous wastes, trade wastes, any materials resulting from a salvage operation, chemicals, Christmas tree wastes, asbestos or asbestos-containing materials, standing or demolished structures containing prohibited materials, and paint. The reason that burning such materials is prohibited is that most, if not all, of the materials release noxious gases into the air upon being burned. These gases are much more toxic than regular wood smoke. Such smoke may merely be a nuisance to some people, but to others, smoke is a dangerous pollutant triggering serious respiratory problems.

Enforcement:

It's important to mention that these laws are state laws and are enforced at the state level by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Enforcement Division. Violations may be anonymously reported to the DEQ by calling the Enforcement Division at (406) 444-0379. **The average fine for minor open burning of prohibited material is \$4000.00**

Our department, Ravalli County Environmental Health, investigates and documents open burning complaints and we refer persistent violators to the state enforcement officials who can assess fines and penalties.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the address above or call (406) 375-6565.

Ravalli County Environmental Health