

## Alternatives to outdoor burning

Composting, chipping, and recycling are viable alternatives to outdoor burning that create a resource instead of air pollution and a solid waste problem.

*Composting* is an easy and inexpensive way to turn yard and gardening refuse into a usable and valuable product. Compost turns organic matter, like leaves, weeds, and wood chips, into a rich soil conditioner.

*Chipping* brush, pruning, land-clearing debris and wood waste makes an excellent mulch or substitute for decorative bark. Chips can protect soil and help keep weeds at bay. They can also be used to line garden paths and trails or provide a softer landing under playground equipment.

*Recycling/reuse.* Many options are available in our area for wood and building scraps, pallets, cardboard and other paper products, and even some types of plastic. Contact Mason County's Solid Waste department or a recycling coordinator for options in your area, (360) 427-9670 ext. 271.

## Why worry about outdoor burning?

Smoke from outdoor burning is harmful to human health. The pollution that is generated from outdoor burning poses a serious threat to residents throughout the counties served by Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA): Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston. Smoke from outdoor burning includes fine particulate matter that is especially harmful to babies and children whose developing lungs are small and vulnerable. Smoke also harms the elderly and those who suffer from heart disease, asthma, emphysema, or other respiratory diseases.

Smoke resulting from outdoor burning is also made up of a complex mixture of compounds. Many are toxic and are known to cause cancer.

Pollution from outdoor burning is also a threat to our environment. Outdoor burning has already been phased out in many urban areas of our state.

For a list of alternatives to burning in your area please contact ORCAA or see the agency web site, [www.orcaa.org](http://www.orcaa.org).

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mason County Fire Marshal's Office  
Mason County Bldg. 8  
615 W. Alder  
Shelton, WA 98584  
(360) 427-9670 ext. 352 (info & permits)

Fire Marshal

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

Olympic Regional Clean Air Agency  
2940 -B Limited Lane NW  
Olympia WA 98502  
(360) 586-1044  
[www.orcaa.org](http://www.orcaa.org)

## TO REPORT A FIRE CALL 911

# GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR BURNING IN MASON COUNTY

Outdoor burning in Mason County, except burning on lands under the jurisdiction of a state or federal agency or a local air quality authority is subject to the requirements outlined in this brochure.



MASON COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL

Mason County Bldg. 8  
615 W Alder  
Shelton, WA 98584

## GENERAL:

- BURN BARRELS ARE ILLEGAL FOR ANY FORM OF OUTDOOR BURNING.
- The Washington Clean Air Act states that only natural vegetation can be disposed of by outdoor burning. The following materials may not be burned in any outdoor fire: Garbage, dead animals, asphalt, petroleum products, paints, rubber products, plastics, paper (other than what is necessary to start a fire), cardboard, treated wood, construction/demolition debris, metal, or any substance (other than natural vegetation) that normally releases toxic emissions, dense smoke, or obnoxious odors when burned.
- The Mason County Fire Marshal is authorized to prohibit all outdoor burning in the case of an extreme fire danger or an air pollution episode.
- **The person in charge of the fire will be liable for the cost of suppression if the fire gets out of control or if becomes necessary to extinguish the fire as the result of an enforcement action.**
- Burn only during periods of calm to light winds. Burning during periods when wind may scatter loose, flammable materials is an extreme fire hazard.

## DEFINITIONS:

- A. "Agricultural Debris" is the burning of vegetative debris from an agricultural operation necessary for disease or pest control, crop propagation and/or crop rotation, or where identified as a best management practice by an authoritative source on agricultural practices.
- B. "Construction/demolition debris" means all material resulting from the construction, renovation, or demolition of buildings, roads, and other man-made structures.
- C. "Native American ceremonial fires" means fires necessary for Native American ceremonies (i.e., conducted by and for Native Americans) if part of a religious ritual. Ceremonial fires must follow all of the guidelines for recreational fires.
- D. "Land clearing burning" means outdoor burning of trees, stumps, shrubbery, or other natural vegetation from land clearing projects (i.e., projects that clear the land surface so it can be developed, used for a different purpose, or left unused).
- E. "Natural vegetation" means unprocessed plant material from herbs, shrubbery, and trees, including grass, weeds, leaves, clippings, pruning, brush, branches, roots.
- F. "Outdoor burning" means the combustion of material of any type in an open fire or in an outdoor container without providing for the control of combustion.

or the control of emissions from the combustion. For the purposes of this rule, "outdoor burning" means all types of outdoor burning except agricultural burning and silvicultural burning.

- G. "Residential burning" means the outdoor burning of leaves, clippings, pruning and other natural vegetation yard and gardening refuse by the property owner or their designee.
- H. "Recreational fire" means cooking fires, campfires, and bonfires using charcoal or firewood that occur in designated areas or on private property for cooking, pleasure, or ceremonial purposes. Recreational fires are not to be used for debris disposal.
- I. "UGA's" are areas where residential or land clearing fires are not allowed (burn permits cannot be issued) because of the population density and the public health impact of smoke from large fires. Recreational cooking fires are allowed in UGA's - NO CLEAN-UP FIRES. See notes on "recreational fires" listed above.

## LAND CLEARING BURNING

1. A permit is required for land clearing burning. Permits are not issued in the field. Permit applications are available at [www.co.mason.wa.us](http://www.co.mason.wa.us) or 615 W Alder, Shelton, WA 98584. Fees are due at permit submittal.
2. Land clearing burn permits require a 30-day written permit, which must be posted on site during entire burn.
3. Once excavator is on site, and piles are ready, call (360) 427-9670, ext. 352 to schedule an inspection.
4. Materials to be burned shall not be moved from one site to another. All material must originate from the property on which the burning is to occur.
5. The fire must not create a nuisance from smoke, obscure visibility on public roads and highways, or endanger life and property.
6. Maximum pile size is twenty (20) feet in diameter.
7. A minimum 10-foot firebreak must be constructed around each pile.
8. Each pile must be at least 100 feet from any structure, and at least 50 feet from standing timber.
9. No land clearing fire is to be commenced before dawn and no material is to be added after dusk.
10. A person and equipment capable of extinguishing the fire must be in constant attendance at the site while burning.
11. Applicant is responsible to make daily calls to Mason County Fire Dispatch at (360) 426-4441 to confirm no issues are present that may restrict burning AND ORCCA for issues effecting air quality (360) 586-1044.

12. A pump truck/trailer is required between April 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>. The pump truck must have 200 ft of hose and 300 gallons of water loaded. (Pump must be capable of pumping: 20 gallons per minute, through a one inch (diameter) 50 foot length of hose).

## RESIDENTIAL BURNING

1. A written permit is not required for residential burning.
2. Maximum pile size is four (4) feet in diameter.
3. A minimum 10-foot firebreak must be constructed around each pile with a 20-foot vertical clearance from overhanging branches.
4. Only one fire at a time per parcel.
5. Burn pile must be at least 50 feet from any structure or combustible material.
6. EXCEPTION: The minimum distance from a structure shall be 25 feet where the pile size is 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height.
7. Materials to be burned shall not be moved from one site to another. All material must originate from the property on which the burning is to occur.
8. The fire must not create a nuisance from smoke, obscure visibility on public roads and highways, or endanger life and property.
9. No residential fire is to be commenced before dawn and no material is to be added after dusk.
10. A person and equipment capable of extinguishing the fire shall be in constant attendance at the site while burning.

## RECREATIONAL FIRES

1. Fire shall be in a metal or concrete fire pit, such as those typically found in designated campgrounds.
2. A written permit is not required for residential burning.
3. Recreational fires are not to be used for debris disposal.
4. Maximum fire size is three (3) feet in diameter.
5. A minimum 10-ft firebreak must be constructed around each fire with a 20-foot vertical clearance from overhanging branches.
6. The fire must be at least 25 feet from any structure or combustible material.
7. The fire must not create a nuisance from smoke, obscure visibility on public roads and highways, or endanger life and property.
8. A person and equipment capable of extinguishing the fire shall be in constant attendance at the site while burning.