

COMMITTED TO SAFETY



Ohio's Open Burning Laws

Basic Knowledge:

There are two sets of statewide outdoor burning regulations in Ohio:

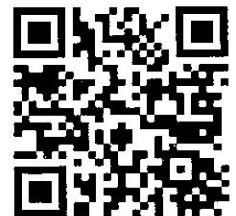
- **Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1503.18** – is under authority of the Ohio Division of Forestry. These regulations are in place to decrease the risk of open burns escaping control and becoming wildfires.
- **Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745.19** – is under authority of the Ohio EPA. These rules regulate open burning year-round to preserve air quality and ensure health of citizens

In addition to the ORC and OAC, the area in which you live may have local regulations or rules addressing open burning. Be sure to check all applicable local rules, and feel free to contact your local fire department for local information about open burning and outdoor fire safety.

Working Towards Safety:

Understanding Ohio's open burning rules is key to working toward safety. The following contains **highlights** of each set of rules; however, prior to conducting any outdoor burning, citizens should check over the entire set of ORC and OAC regulations in order to ensure they are compliant and safe. Use the QR codes here for quick access.

- **Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1503.18** – Ohio Division of Forestry
 - Prohibits most open burning in unincorporated parts of Ohio during the months of March, April, May, October, and November between 6 AM and 6 PM.
 - When burning outside of the restricted times, citizens must remain present with their fire and take precautions to prevent escape, such as clearing of a fire ring to bare soil and using a proper burn barrel when practical.
- **Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3745.19** – Ohio EPA
 - Open burn must be greater than 1000 ft from an inhabited building.
 - Smoke from an open burn cannot impair visibility on roadway, railway, or airfield.
 - Open burning is prohibited during an air pollution alert, warning, or emergency
 - Items always prohibited from open burning include: food waste, dead animals, and petroleum or rubber-base products



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High Wildfire Danger Days

Basic Knowledge:

Certain weather conditions lead to increased wildfire danger in Ohio. The combination of *warm, dry (low humidity), and windy/gusty weather conditions* form an environment in which it is easy for wildfire to start and grow quickly. While each of these factors alone don't necessarily cause alarm, when two or all three are put together they may raise concern for increased wildfire danger. The weather factors can come together at any point throughout the year, but most common align in the Spring or Fall to cause high wildfire danger.

The National Weather Service may issue a Fire Weather Watch or Red Flag warning when weather conditions begin to reach very critical wildfire danger levels. These notices can be found at www.weather.gov

****Wildfire Danger can be very high even if a Red Flag Watch or Warning is not issued****

Working Towards Safety:

Understanding when Ohio is experiencing high wildfire danger is key to working toward safety.

- **Warm days** – Warm, sunny days cause dead leaves and dormant grass to heat up, which drives the moisture out of it through evaporation, and makes the material more susceptible to ignition.
- **Dry conditions** – Period of low relative humidity also cause light vegetation like leaves and grass to become drier and more prone to ignition. Prolonged periods of drought can cause larger materials like logs to become very dry and available to burn
- **Windy / Gusty** – Windy conditions can easily cause embers to blow out of control and rapidly push flames across dry vegetation. Gusty, erratic winds can cause the direction of fire spread to change quickly, which is a big safety hazard.

To summarize, warm and dry conditions drive the moisture out of vegetation and make it more combustible. Windy conditions make it easy for a fire to escape control. Spring and Fall generally have the most high wildfire danger days in Ohio, but wildfire danger can become elevated anytime throughout the year if weather conditions are right.

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Protecting Your Home from Wildfire

Basic Knowledge:

Nearly all wildfires in Ohio are caused by people, and because of that, wildfires usually burn in fairly close proximity to people, homes, and valuable property.

Taking the time to mitigate or remove hazards from around your home and property can result in increased safety from wildfire, and may provide a safer area in which firefighters can work in if they need to respond for fire suppression.

If a wildfire is burning close to your home immediately notify 911 or the local fire department, and relocate yourself and anyone else around to a safer place – go away from the direction the fire is spreading and try to stay in an area where there are no flammable materials.

Working Towards Safety:

Understanding how to identify and mitigate wildfire hazards is key to working toward safety.

- **Remove** accumulations of dry grass and dead leaves from around your yard. Grass and leaves are the primary carriers of fire – removal decreases the likelihood of fire spreading across the yard and towards your home, shed, propane tank, or other valuable property.
- Make sure the **fire department** can access your property. Post your street address number at the end of the driveway so the fire department can locate your place, and ensure the driveway is accessible by a large fire truck.
- Remove the ignition source by **avoiding outdoor burning**. Ohio Revised Code prohibits most outdoor burning between 6AM and 6PM in March, April, May, October, and November. Consider alternatives like mulching or composting.
- If you choose to burn, make sure you choose the right time and right location. Use a burn barrel with a wire mesh cover and make sure the area around the barrel is clear of flammable vegetation. **Never burn on windy or gusty days.**