

Recreational Fires

including backyard pits and patio heaters



A Message from the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

Recreational Fires - Defined

Recreational fires are defined in state law as cooking fires, charcoal barbecues and campfires that occur in designated areas or on private property for cooking, pleasure or ceremonial purposes. Fires lit in chimneas, fire pits and fire bowls and similar free-standing devices, commonly sold at home improvement stores and mass retailers, fall under this definition. These devices are allowed in urbanized and unincorporated areas, when specific requirements are followed per state regulations.

Recreational fires may be no larger than three feet in diameter and two feet in height, and may not be used for the purpose of disposal. A permit is not required, although the rules listed below must be followed.

Social event fires are those larger than three feet in diameter and two feet in height. They are restricted to public events or celebrations and require a written permit. These fires cannot be used for the purpose of disposal. A complete permit application and \$50 nonrefundable fee must be submitted at least 3 working days prior to the event. Contact Derek Aubrey at Spokane Clean Air, 477-4727, extension 120, for detailed information and a permit application. In addition, the City of Spokane Fire Department requires a permit for social event fires. Call 625-7000 for details and an application form.

Rules to Follow — It is important that rules are followed whenever you have a recreational fire

- ✓ The only legal fuels are charcoal, natural gas, propane or firewood. Wood must be dry, clean and natural (untreated) or manufactured logs. The fire cannot be used for disposal purposes.
- ✓ The fire may not cause a nuisance to your neighbors with excessive smoke and odors.
- ✓ A wood or charcoal-fueled fire must be kept at least 25 feet away from any structure.

- ✓ Check for temporary outdoor burn bans before using your device. A ban, though infrequent, may be issued by Spokane Clean Air if air quality is declining. More often and especially during the dry summer months, burning may be restricted due to fire danger. Call the Burn Info Hotline at 477-4710 to check on the current burning status or visit www.spokanecleanair.org/burning_conditions.asp

Smoke and Your Health — Burning even natural,

untreated firewood creates microscopic smoke particles that can affect you,

your family members and neighbors. Smoke particles contain toxic compounds, such as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. When inhaled, tiny particles collect in the lungs, causing structural and chemical changes, as well as damage to the alveoli (tiny air sacs where oxygen enters the blood stream).

Those at greatest risk are young children, the elderly, and those with chronic heart and lung diseases.



Things to Consider — Looking for a safer,

healthier alternative to a smoky chimnea or fire bowl? There are many types of patio heaters and fire pits that use natural gas, propane or electricity. Building permits may be required for the installation of certain recreational fire devices (gas/propane appliances), check with your local building department.

Other local rules may apply to your use of a recreational-type fire, such as homeowner assn. covenants, rental agreements, etc.—so be sure to check your contracts.

For more information, call 477-4727.

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