



Facts on Open Burning Under Missouri Regulations

Air Pollution Control Program fact sheet

3/2013

Open burning is the burning of any materials in which air contaminants are emitted directly into the air without first passing through a stack or chimney. This fact sheet summarizes allowable and prohibited open burning under Missouri regulations. It does not include open burning restrictions that city or county governments may impose in addition to Missouri's state regulations. Prior to conducting any open burning, businesses and citizens should contact the city or county of jurisdiction for any local restrictions.

The open burning of certain trade wastes and tires is prohibited because the toxic emissions that can be released are harmful to human health. Smoke from fires also typically produces large amounts of small particulate matter that can be inhaled, causing respiratory problems. The burning of common household trash, including paper products and food wastes, can also have severe consequences. Studies have indicated the open burning of an individual household's trash could release pollutants in higher levels than the burning of the trash of thousands of homes by a municipal waste incinerator because the lower combustion temperatures prevent complete incineration. These pollutants can include dioxins, volatile organic compounds, acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, hydrogen chloride and naphthalene. Open burning exposes individuals to toxic emissions that may irritate the eyes, skin and upper respiratory tract. The central nervous system can also be affected causing headaches, dizziness and fatigue.

Because of these potential dangers, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources strongly discourages open burning of any material prior to investigating alternatives. Some rural areas can participate in a "green box" service, which provides a trash collection point near a centrally located county road for local residents to use. Green boxes are usually picked up or emptied once a week. Other options include waste disposal services, waste diversion, recycling and composting. Contact your local Solid Waste Management District for assistance in implementing these safer alternatives to open burning.

Prohibited Open Burning Under State Regulation

Any waste generated by a business, trade, industry, salvage or demolition operation cannot be burned without a permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources or its delegated local agency. Permits will only be considered for untreated wood wastes. Wastes that may not be burned include but are not limited to tires, rubber products, hazardous materials, Styrofoam™, plastics, petroleum-based products, demolition waste, treated wood and any asbestos-containing material.

Allowable Open Burning Under State Regulations

Note: Local governments may have stricter laws and policies

Open Burning of Household Refuse

General Provisions: Missouri allows open burning of household refuse from four dwelling units or less provided it originates and is burned on the same premises. This exemption does not apply to mobile home parks or apartment complexes. Residential waste is solid waste produced by routine household activities, such as paper waste and garbage from daily activities. This does not include home remodeling wastes, wastes from home businesses, durable goods such as old appliances, carpets or furniture, tires or other nonroutine household waste. Materials such as tires or used oil may not be used to start the fires or be burned in the fires.

Kansas City and St. Joseph metropolitan areas: Open burning is allowed provided it occurs within an area zoned for agricultural purposes and outside the portion of the metropolitan areas surrounding the corporate limits of Kansas City and St. Joseph and their bordering municipalities.

Outstate area: No special day, time or location restrictions.

Springfield-Greene County area: Open burning is allowed provided that burning takes place outside the corporate limits of Springfield and only within areas zoned A-1, Agricultural District.

St. Louis metropolitan area: Open burning of household refuse is prohibited in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Open Burning of Yard Wastes

General Provisions: Missouri allows open burning of yard wastes from sites provided it originates and is burned on the same premises. Materials such as tires or used oil may not be used to start the fires or be burned in the fires. Yard waste includes trees, tree leaves, brush or other vegetation.

Kansas City metropolitan area: Open burning of trees, tree leaves, brush or any other type of vegetation requires an open burning permit.

St. Joseph metropolitan area: Open burning of residential yard wastes is allowed only during a three-week period in spring and during a three-week period in fall between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The two, three-week periods are to be determined by the city along with state agencies and the state fire marshal.

Outstate area: No special day, time or location restrictions.

Springfield-Greene County area: The City of Springfield requires an open burning permit for the open burning of trees, brush or any other type of vegetation. The City of Springfield prohibits the open burning of tree leaves.

St. Louis metropolitan area: Open burning of trees, tree leaves or brush is allowed only in areas outside of incorporated municipalities from Sept. 16 to April 14 of each calendar year. These brush piles are limited to a base of 16 square feet and the burning is allowed from 10 a.m. through 4 p.m.

Open Burning for Fire Training Purposes

Missouri allows fires set for the purpose of training fire fighters provided they are conducted in accordance with National Fire Protection Association Standards 600 and 1403. Timely notification should be provided to the appropriate regional office or delegated local agency. All fire training exercises involving donated or acquired structures must be conducted in compliance with 40 CFR part 61 subpart M, *National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants-Asbestos*. The use of donated or acquired structures for training is discussed in Publication 2029. All petroleum based products and asbestos containing materials must be removed from any structure that is to be burned as part of a training exercise.

Open Burning in Agricultural, Natural Resource or Land Management Operations

Missouri allows agricultural burning throughout the state. However, several exceptions apply. Materials such as tires or used oil may not be used to start the fires or be burned in the fires. Any burning that creates a health hazard, nuisance or produces smoke that impairs visibility for those operating motor vehicles or airplanes is prohibited. Contact the St. Louis Regional Office before burning in the St. Louis metropolitan area from April 15 to Sept. 15. Botanical nursery operations or greenhouses are not considered agricultural operations.

Open Burning in Land Clearing Operations

Open burning of tree trunks, tree limbs and vegetation from land clearing operations is allowed without an air curtain destructor or permit in the outstate area if the burning takes place outside the city limits of any incorporated area or municipality and at least 200 yards from the nearest inhabited dwelling. Materials such as tires or used oil may not be used to start the fires or be burned in the fires. Permits containing special conditions may be issued by regional offices or local agencies for sites unable to comply with the requirements above. See the Required Open Burning Permits section below for exceptions in the Springfield-Greene County area, and Kansas City and St. Louis Metropolitan areas.

Open Burning at Wood Processing Facilities

Open burning of untreated wood waste from wood processing facilities is allowed if production is less than 8,000 board-feet per day and the facility was in existence as of Mar. 25, 1976, but has not relocated to a new site. The burning also must be done at least 200 yards from the nearest occupied structure.

Open burning of untreated wood waste from wood processing facilities is allowed if production is less than 8,000 board-feet per day and the facility has relocated or from new wood processing facilities not in existence as of Sept. 18, 1970, and the facility and the burning are at least one mile outside city limits. The burning also must be done at least 200 yards from the nearest occupied structure.

Open Burning for Recreational Purposes

Campfires and other fires used solely for recreational purposes, ceremonial occasions or for outdoor noncommercial preparation of food are allowed in Missouri. Fires shall include only vegetative woody materials or untreated wood products.

Required Open Burning Permits

The open burning of certain trade wastes, primarily untreated wood wastes such as pallets or crates, throughout the state, and vegetation from land clearing operations in the Springfield-Greene County area and the Kansas City and St. Louis Metropolitan areas, may be permitted only when it can be shown that open burning is the only feasible method of disposal and that disposal is in the public interest. In the St. Louis nonattainment area, permits will not be issued unless it can be shown that emissions from open burning would be less than any other waste management or disposal method. The open burning permit requires the facility, in most cases, to use an air curtain destructor.

Commercial and municipal utility tree trimming operations must submit a request to the appropriate regional office for an annually renewable open burning permit. The request must describe the general size, condition and age of the tree trunks and tree limbs to be open burned. Air curtain destructors are generally required at dedicated sites where burning occurs.

Commercial and municipal utility tree trimming operations must submit an application for an open burning permit to the appropriate regional office or local agency.

The information provided in this fact sheet should not be construed to permit open burning that causes or constitutes a public health hazard, nuisance or a hazard to vehicular or air traffic or violates any other rule or statute.

Definitions

St. Louis metropolitan area: The geographical area comprising St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson and Franklin Counties and the city of St. Louis. These counties are also currently a nonattainment area for ground-level ozone.

Springfield-Greene County area: The geographical area contained within Greene County.

Kansas City metropolitan area: The geographical area comprising Jackson, Cass, Clay, Platte, Ray and Buchanan counties.

Outstate area: The geographical area comprising those counties not contained in the St. Louis metropolitan area, the Springfield-Greene County area or the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Air Curtain Destructor: An air pollution control device designed to increase burning efficiency, reducing air contaminant emissions during open burning.

Open Burning Permit: A permit that must be applied for and then granted in order to open burn or open burn with restrictions. Permit applications must be sent to the Regional Office or local agency that has jurisdiction over your area. Applications are available at www.dnr.mo.gov/forms or any regional or local agency office.

Untreated Wood: Lumber and other wooden materials that have not been chemically treated for resistance to moisture, fire, fungi, insects and other pests or has not otherwise been treated or manufactured with chemicals, or that does not contain adhesives or resins. Untreated wood does not include plywood, particleboard, chipboard or wood with other than minimal amounts of paint, coating or finish.

For More Information

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Air Pollution Control Program
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
800-361-4827 or 537-751-4817 office
573-751-2706 fax
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/apcp/index.html

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Solid Waste Management Program
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
800-361-4827 or 573-751-5401 office
573-526-3902 fax
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swmp/index.html

Kansas City Air Quality Program
Air Quality Section
200 Troost Ave., Suite 3200
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-513-6314
Fax: 816-513-6173

St. Louis County Department of Health
Air Pollution Control Program
6121 North Hanley Road
St. Louis, MO 63134
314-615-8924
[www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/
EnvironmentalServices/AirPollutionControlProgram](http://www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/EnvironmentalServices/AirPollutionControlProgram)
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