

Burning Household Waste

Burning household waste is unhealthy

Smoke from burning household waste is unhealthy to breathe, particularly for small children, pregnant women, older adults and people with asthma or other respiratory ailments:

- Burn barrels are inefficient and pollute because they create low temperature fires, receive little oxygen and produce a lot of smoke. Many household products, such as bleached paper products and some plastics contain chlorine. When burned, chlorine creates dioxin. Exposure to dioxin is associated with cancer and birth defects.
- Many household products, such as slick colored papers and synthetic inks, release heavy metals when burned. Human contact with heavy metals is also linked to cancer and birth defects.
- Many household products contain chemicals such as hydrochloric acid which are known to irritate the skin and eyes.
- Burn barrels produce many toxic air pollutants. Virtually all of the pollutants are released into the air close to ground level where they are easily inhaled.



Burning household waste harms the environment

Pollutants released when household waste is burned eventually end up back on the ground and in the water and can build up to dangerously high levels in plants, animals, and people. Health effects after exposure to these pollutants can include cancer, deformed offspring, and reproductive and immune system failure.

Alternatives to burning household waste

- **Reduce** – Avoid purchasing disposable items. Buy products in bulk or economy sizes instead of in individually wrapped or in single serving sizes. Buy products that can be recharged, reused, or refilled.
- **Reuse** – Donate unwanted clothing, furniture, and toys to friends, relatives or charities. Give unwanted magazines and books to hospitals or nursing homes. Mend and repair rather than discard or replace.
- **Recycle** – Separate the recyclable items, such as newspapers, glass and plastic containers and tin cans, from your residential waste and prepare them for collection or drop-off at a local recycling station.
- **Disposal** – Have household waste picked up by a licensed waste removal company or take it to a licensed disposal facility rather than burning it.

Regulations on burning household waste

State of Oregon regulations prohibit the open burning of any material that creates dense smoke or noxious odors. This includes the following materials:

- Plastics, like foam cups, meat trays and egg containers
- Asbestos
- Tires or other rubber products
- Garbage and food waste
- Wire insulation
- Waste oil and other petroleum products
- Automobile parts, including frames
- Dead animals

In addition, burning household waste is prohibited altogether in certain areas by DEQ rules or local city and county ordinances.

Additional information on regulations regarding burning household waste in Oregon can be found in Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 340, Division 264. These rules are available on DEQ's website <https://www.oregon.gov/deq>.



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www.oregon.gov/DEQ

*DEQ is a leader in restoring,
maintaining and enhancing
the quality of Oregon's air,
land and water.*

For more information on Oregon's open burning rules and your city or county recycling contact person, call your local DEQ office, or contact:

- Lane Regional Air Protection Agency
<http://www.lrapa.org>
541-736-1056 or 877-285-7272 LRAPA
24-hr line: 541-726-3976
- Office of State Fire Marshal
<https://www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/sfm>

Complaints

Please call your local fire department to report an open burning complaint.

You may also contact DEQ's complaint hotline at 888-997-7888 or submit a complaint online at

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Get-Involved/Pages/File-Pollution-Complaint.aspx>

You will need to provide a complete address if you would like DEQ to follow up on your complaint.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email

deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.