



Columbia River Fire & Rescue

Guide to Open Burning Regulations

BURN DAY INFORMATION LINE: 503-397-4800

The open burning regulations observed in Columbia County are a compilation of several State Agency regulations. The Department of Forestry regulates burning operations and writes the burn permits associated with Forest Management. The Department of Agriculture regulates burning associated with agricultural operations (the Fire District will write the Burn Permit). The Department of Environmental Quality regulates burning for Commercial & Industrial uses (which are generally prohibited) and land clearing for future residential uses within city limits and the area within three miles of a city's limits. DEQ will write these permits. The DEQ also is responsible for regulating all burning if it negatively impacts air quality standards. The Office of the State Fire Marshal has regulations on when weather conditions make burning too hazardous and burning along major traffic corridors. The Fire Districts regulate and write permits for backyard burning for existing residential uses, land clearing for future residential uses outside three miles from city limits and hazard abatement burning.

The Cities of Columbia City and St Helens have adopted ordinances that further restrict backyard burning to two weeks (three weekends) in April and two weeks (three weekends) in October or November of each year.

OPEN BURNING PERMIT REGULATIONS

Please follow these directions very carefully. An adopted policy of the District Board of Directors allows *Columbia River Fire & Rescue* to bill for ALL illegal fires. A **minimum** response charge starts at \$250.00. Municipal fines may also apply within the cities of Columbia City, Prescott, Rainier, and St Helens.

Section I: Burning Permits:

- A. Burning permits shall be required for all open burning in the *Columbia River Fire & Rescue* service area, as required by ORS 478.996 (7) and OAR 340-23 with the exception of small recreational fires.
- B. It is the policy of the Fire District to issue permits that are valid for a period of one year from the date of issue. Special Permits for land clearing (3 miles beyond the city limits of St Helens) and agricultural field burning shall be for a period of three days from the date of issue. Hazard Abatement permits shall be only for the day of the burn.
- C. No person shall cause or allow to be initiated or maintained any open burning that is prohibited by any rule of the Fire District, State Statute, or Local Ordinance.
- D. Property owners and operators who are conducting illegal burning may be cited and fined for such action (ORS 478.960, Oregon Fire Code, and applicable city ordinance). Costs for fire suppression may also be charged (ORS 478.965).
- E. Open burning in violation of any rule of the Fire District shall be promptly extinguished by the person in attendance or person responsible when notified to extinguish the fire by either the Fire District or other appropriate agency official.
- F. Any burning permit that has been issued by the Fire District may be revoked at any time for any violation of the burning regulations.
- G. Open burning authorized by these rules does not exempt or excuse any person from liability or consequences, damages, or injuries resulting from burning; nor does it exempt any person from complying with applicable laws, ordinances, or regulations of other governmental agencies having jurisdiction.
- H. Burning permits will **NOT** be issued to businesses, churches, industries, institutions, building contractors or multi-family dwelling sites.

EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL BURNING:

1. Burning without a valid burning permit
2. Burning before/after established burning hours
3. Not complying with minimum requirements as stated in Section IA
4. Any fire that has escaped or is not under the direct control of the landowner/occupant
5. Burning on a **NO BURN DAY**
6. Burning of commercial or industrial waste
7. Land clearing within 3 miles of the city limits without a letter permit from DEQ
8. Open burning of any waste materials which normally emit dense smoke, noxious odors, or which may tend to create a public nuisance such as (but not limited to): household garbage, plastics, grass clippings, auto bodies, asphalt, waste, petroleum products, rubber products, animal remains and animal or vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking or service of food
9. Running fires and building removal will **NOT** be allowed, unless a special permit is issued
10. Any burning in an approved barrel within 15 ft from a tree, vehicle, structure, or property line*

**Note: Burn barrels are prohibited in the Cities of St Helens and Columbia City by local ordinance*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO CONDUCT BURNING:

- A valid burning permit
- Burning **must only be done** during daylight hours on days when open burning is permitted by air quality and Fire District regulatory authorities (Contact the burn line at 503-397-4800 to make sure it is a burn day)
- One person must be in attendance at all times until the fire is completely extinguished
- A garden hose, or a shovel as well as a 5 gallon bucket of water
- A clear area around the burn site that will prevent your fire from escaping
- A “fire break” must be constructed around the burn site to prevent the fire from creeping to adjoining fuels
- Yard and garden trimmings must be cut and placed into manageable piles
- All combustible materials shall be dried to the extent practical to prevent emission of excessive smoke. Grass clippings are **NOT** allowed to be burned
- Clearance Requirements:

Burn Barrels: A 15 foot minimum clearance from structures, fences, trees, vehicles or property lines*

****Note: Burn Barrels are prohibited in the Cities of St Helens and Columbia City by local ordinance***

Burn Piles: For piles larger than 3 feet in diameter, a minimum of 50 feet of clearance is needed. For piles smaller than 3 feet in diameter, a minimum of 25 feet clearance is needed. Clearances are from structures, fences, trees, vehicles, or property lines.

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