

Our Water

Keeping it Clean

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

Open Burning

What goes up may come down...in our water

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“What goes up must come down.”

Not only does this apply to objects tossed in the air, but also toxic chemicals released when certain items are burned. Those chemicals can end up falling back to earth along with precipitation. As precipitation generates runoff, the chemicals may enter the state’s surface waters.

Open burning as defined by North Dakota Administrative Code 33.1-15-01.26 is:

“The burning of any matter in such a manner that products of combustion resulting from the burning are emitted directly

into the ambient (surrounding outside) air without passing through an adequate stack, duct or chimney.”

Items that cannot be burned include:

- Trade waste generated from a commercial process or operation.
- Rubber products (tires).
- Tar paper.
- Asphalt shingles.
- Plastics .
- Treated wood products (railroad ties, utility poles, etc.).
- Other materials that may produce air contaminants.

There are some categories of permissible open burning; some of these are as follows:

- Fires for instruction and training of firefighting personnel.
- Fires set for the elimination of a fire hazard.
- Fires set for the removal of dangerous or hazardous material.
- Campfires and other fires for the outdoor preparation of food.
- Agricultural crop burning.
- Land clearing and right-of-way maintenance.

***Note:** Some open-burning activities require approval from the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) prior to beginning.

When any open burn is conducted, it must comply with conditions such as;

- No public nuisance is or will be created.
- No occupied building may be impacted by air contaminants from the burning.
- No traffic hazards can be created.
- The burning must be supervised at all times.

Please visit www.deq.nd.gov or call 701-328-5150, if you have questions about items that may or may not be suitable for burning. Staff can provide you with locations of approved landfills for safe disposal of the items or suggest alternatives to burning the waste materials, such as recycling.



This fire was burning drums of waste oil, railroad ties, utility poles and tires--all materials prohibited from open burning.

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