

FORSYTH COUNTY OUTDOOR BURNING REGULATIONS SUMMARY

GENERAL RULES

- From May 1 through September 30, there is a state mandated burning ban in Forsyth County.
- All authorized burning shall occur between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and one hour before sunset (*recreational/cooking fires will be exempt from this requirement*).
- Open burning will not be authorized when conditions are such that the burn may jeopardize the safety of life and/or property, an air pollution episode or when restrictions are imposed by a state or federal agency for any reason.
- All authorized burns must be attended by a competent person 16 years or older having the ability to extinguish the fire.
- The Forsyth County Fire Department shall have the authority to cause any fire to be extinguished if it is determined that there is a danger to public safety, a danger to public or private property, a nuisance or sign of environmental harm.
- The fire marshal or his/her designee shall have the authority to impose additional safety precautions or restrict burning, including the issuance of a complete open burning ban, if it is determined that open burning imposes a threat to the public health, safety and general welfare.
- Required Forsyth County Fire Department notifications shall be made to 678-455-8072 or by email at firemarshal@forsythco.com.

LEAF PILES AND OTHER YARD DEBRIS

- No burns will be authorized when the humidity is less than 25% or the winds are greater than 10 mph.
- No burning within 50 feet of a structure or 25 feet from a property line (or woodlands, forestland, and/or open field that contains brush, grass, or other flammable material per O.C.G.A. 12-6-90).
- No burn pile shall be larger than six feet in diameter by two feet high.
- There shall be at least ten feet between burn piles and no more than two burn piles burning at any time.

NOT ALLOWED

- Aerial luminaries – Unmanned free-floating devices capable of producing an open flame such as, but not limited to devices commonly known as sky lanterns, flying luminaries, floating lanterns and fire balloons.
- Household garbage – The burning of “household” garbage, trash, and construction debris.

ALLOWED WITHOUT A PERMIT OR NOTIFICATION

- Recreational/cooking fires
- Firefighter training
- Open flame equipment
- Explosives packing materials
- Miscellaneous
- Leaf Piles
- Other yard debris

REQUIRES A PRE-BURN NOTIFICATION MADE TO GA FORESTRY AND THE FORSYTH COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Agricultural Fires
- Forest Lands

REQUIRES AT LEAST 48 HOURS NOTIFICATION PRIOR TO THE BURN AND AUTHORIZATION BY THE FIRE MARSHAL

- Bonfires
- Disease and pest control
- Emergency burning

REQUIRES AT LEAST 48 HOURS NOTIFICATION PRIOR TO THE BURN, THE USE OF AN AIR CURTAIN DESTRUCTOR (ACD), THE PAYMENT OF A \$500 FEE, AND THE ISSUANCE OF A PERMIT FROM THE FORSYTH COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Land clearing

TIME OF YEAR RESTRICTIONS

During the months of May, June, July, August and September the only approved open burning will be:

- Recreational/cooking fires
- Firefighter training
- Open flame equipment
- Explosives packing materials
- Miscellaneous
- Disease and pest control (when authorized by the Fire Marshal)
- Emergency burning (when authorized by the Fire Marshal)

DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **Agricultural Fires:** Carrying out recognized agricultural procedures necessary for production or harvesting of crops.
- 2) **Forest Lands:** The burning over of any forestland by the owner of such land (prescribed or slash burning).
- 3) **Leaf Piles:** Burning of leaf piles on the premises on which they fall by the person in control of the premises. No leaf burn pile shall be larger than six feet in diameter by two feet high. There shall be ten feet between burn piles. No burning within 50 feet of a structure or 25 feet from a property line (*or woodlands, forestland, and/or open field that contains brush, grass, or other flammable material per O.C.G.A. 12-6-90*). There shall be no more than two burn piles burning at any time. Failure to comply with these rules which results in an uncontrolled fire or a valid complaint that requires the response of the fire department will result in the fire being immediately extinguished.
- 4) **Other Yard Debris:** Reduction of other "natural vegetation" such as trees, downed trees and parts thereof, pine straw, and sticks on the premises on which they fall by the person in control of the premises. No burn pile shall be larger than six feet in diameter by two feet high. There shall be ten feet between burn piles. No burning within 50 feet of a structure or 25 feet from a property line (*or woodlands, forestland, and/or open field that contains brush, grass, or other flammable material per O.C.G.A. 12-6-90*). There shall be no more than two burn piles burning at any time. Failure to comply with these rules which results in an uncontrolled fire or a valid complaint that requires the response of the fire department will result in the fire being immediately extinguished.
- 5) **Recreation/Cooking Fires:** For recreational purposes, cooking food for immediate human consumption, camp fires in designated camping areas and barbecue grills. Recreational bonfires are subject to the location and fuel type.
- 6) **Firefighter Training:** Fires set for training firefighting personnel when authorized by the Forsyth County Fire Chief.
- 7) **Open Flame Equipment:** Operation of devices using open flames such as tar kettles, blow torches, welding torches, portable heaters, and other flame-making equipment where approved safety measures are used.
- 8) **Explosives Packing Materials:** Disposal of all packing material previously containing explosives in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor Safety Regulation.
- 9) **Miscellaneous:** Setting and maintenance by contractors and tradesmen of miscellaneous small fires necessary to such activities as street paving, installation or repair of utilities provided such fires are kept small. This shall include warming fires subject to the following restrictions. Warming fires shall be contained within a metal barrel of 55-gallon capacity or less. Untreated wood or lumber shall be the only material or substance permitted to be burned. The container for the warming fire shall be not less than 25 feet from any structure. No on ground warming fires are permitted. Warming fires are only permitted when the temperature is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less.
- 10) **Bonfires:** No person shall kindle or maintain any bonfire or authorize any such fire to be kindled or maintained on any private or public land unless the location is no less than 50 feet from a structure with a size not to exceed four cubic feet of combustible materials and 100 feet from a structure with a size not to exceed five cubic feet of combustible materials. Bonfires shall be limited to activities sponsored by civic, educational, religious or other groups for the purpose of celebration, etc. An example would be a high school pep rally. Bonfires shall be constantly attended by a competent person until such fire is extinguished. Such person shall have a garden hose connected to a water supply, or other fire extinguishing equipment, capable of extinguishing the fire, readily available for use.
- 11) **Disease and Pest Control:** Open burning may be authorized for the control of disease and pest control.
- 12) **Emergency Burning:** The burning of storm debris on-site may be authorized by the fire marshal or his/her designee when there is no adequate disposal facility reasonably available.
- 13) **Land Clearing:** Open burning of vegetative material for the purpose of land clearing and/or the construction of rights-of-way. Unless otherwise covered in this article, permits shall only be issued when an air curtain destructor (ACD) is being used and the following conditions are met:
 - A permit is obtained from the Forsyth County Fire Department prior to initiation of any open burning.
 - The location of the ACD is at least 300 feet from any dwelling or public road, street, or highway.
 - No more than one air curtain destructor is operated within a ten-acre area at one time or there must be at least 1,000 feet between any two ACDs.
 - Only wood waste consisting of trees, logs, large brush and stumps which are relatively free of soil are burned.
 - Tires or other rubber products, plastics, heavy oils, asphaltic material, are not used to start or maintain the operation of an ACD.
 - The ACD is operated in accordance with operating procedures set forth by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. (available at fire department headquarters)
 - The cleaning out of the ACD pit is performed in a manner to prevent fugitive dust.
 - Permits may be issued for open burning of agricultural land where the use of an ACD is not practical.
- 14) **Outdoor fireplaces, chimineas, fire bowls, and other similar devices,** shall be constructed and used in compliance with manufacturer's instructions and recommendations and shall not be operated inside structures, on combustible surfaces or within 25 feet of combustible material. The only materials that may be burned in such devices is untreated wood, lumber, manufactured fire logs, or charcoal.

Please direct any question to the Fire Safety Division at 678-455-8072 or by email at firemarshal@forsythco.com.