



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD. FIRE / EMS DEPARTMENT

TIPsheet



Recreational Fires & Portable Outdoor Fireplaces

NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION? PLEASE CONTACT THE
PGFD/EMS DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY OUTREACH OFFICE AT 301-883-5250



Recreational fires in fire pits and chimneas have become more common as these devices have become popular backyard features and widely available at home improvement stores and garden centers.

To address these new devices and to improve community safety when any open fire is kindled in the County, the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department has updated the Fire Safety Law of Prince George's County (Subtitle 11) - Sec. 11-268. Open [fires generally.] Burning, Recreational Fires and Portable Outdoor Fireplaces.

Generally, open burning is prohibited. Using fire to dispose of household waste or yard waste, including leaves, is a violation of State and local air pollution regulations. Residents are encouraged to compost yard waste or use the County provided yard waste collection service. This prohibition on open burning does not include small recreational fires such as campfires or fires in fire pits in residential settings. To ensure these small recreation fires are kindled safely and monitored until fully extinguished, effective July 5, 2016, the County's Fire Safety Law now includes the following requirements:

IN GENERAL:

- Recreational fires must be attended at all times by a person 18 years of age or older who is in direct view of the fire until it is completely extinguished. No fire should be left to smolder.
- A hose, fire extinguisher or other means to extinguish the fire must be available.
- Only dry natural wood (firewood) can be burned in a recreational fire.
- Recreational fire will be prohibited during drought conditions, strong winds, or air pollution events (Code Red or Code Orange.)
- Thick smoke and visible smoke that steadily crosses property lines are prohibited.

- Fires must be 30 feet from any structure. Fires are not allowed on any balcony or deck.

FIXED OR PORTABLE FIRE PITS, FIREPLACES AND CHIMNEA'S:

- Fires in these devices must be 30 feet from any structure. Fires are not allowed on any balcony or deck. Fires in these devices must be 30 feet from any road, sidewalk or public way.

PROPANE FUELED FIRE PITS:

- Fixed or portable fireplaces or pits fueled by natural gas or propane are permitted at single family dwellings and townhomes when used according to the manufactures guidelines. Any such propane fueled fire pit or fireplace used on a deck must be at least 10 feet from the house and the combustion area cannot be in contact with combustibile decking.

For more comprehensive information on the regulation of open burning and recreational fires, please contact the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department's Office of the Fire Marshal at 301-583-1830.