



REDUCE WILDFIRE DANGER AROUND YOUR HOME WITH THE HELP OF SAFE BURN PILES AND CHIPPING PROGRAMS

April 2020

Since we are all finding ourselves restricted to being at home more due to the COVID-19 orders, now is a good time to begin doing work around your property to improve fire defensible space. Each of us needs to do what we can to make our homes and property more defensible for what may become a long and challenging fire season ahead.

Working together with your neighbors whenever possible will create broad areas of fire defensible space around all structures and along evacuation routes, thereby multiplying the benefits of your efforts. Anything you can do will make a positive difference.

Disposing of dead and excess vegetation is always an issue property owners grapple with. Rather than increasing fire hazards by leaving piles of brush and branches around your property, remove dry excess fuel in a safe manner. Vegetation/fire hazard removal options are:

- green waste pick up,
- hauling vegetation to the local landfill,
- curbside mechanical chipping or
- backyard burning (if applicable).

Green Waste Pick Up: Green waste pick up is available to all Santa Cruz County residents. Call your waste pick up company to schedule larger items or additional green waste bins when necessary.

Landfill/Recycling: Landfills accept vegetative debris. Many landfills have recycling centers which chip / mulch vegetative waste for reuse.

Curbside Mechanical Chipping: You can purchase your own chipper, hire professionals to do chipping for you, or you can take advantage of the FREE local chipping program hosted by the Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County. This FREE program has limited funding, so if you are interested, please sign up now! For more information, follow this link: [Landowner Assistance](#)

SIGN UP NOW FOR FREE CHIPPING PROGRAMS!

Backyard Burning: Burning excess vegetation is another way to reduce fuel hazards, especially when the material is located in an area difficult to access with a chipper. Residential or backyard burning must be allowed in your fire district, burn permits are required and rules must be followed.

Not all fire districts issue backyard burn/residential burn permits, however, just because a fire district does not issue backyard burn permits does not negate the fact that burn permits are required. If you are uncertain where to obtain a burn permit or if you have any other questions regarding backyard burns or the permitting process, please call the Monterey Air Resources

District at (831) 647-9411. Burning without permits or on no-burn days will be subject to penalties and fines, where applicable.

Violations of any burning permit terms are a violation of state law (Public Resources Code 4421, 4422, 4423 And 4425) and Health & Safety Code Section 13007: "Any person who personally or through another willfully, negligently, or in violation of law, sets fire to, allows fire to be set to, or allows a fire kindled or attended by him to escape to, the property of another, whether privately or publicly owned, is liable to the owner of such property for any damages to the property caused by the fire."

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT BACKYARD BURNING:

- Backyard burning is to dispose of dry vegetation grown on a residential, non-agricultural property.
- Residential property size requirement is a minimum of ½ acre in Non-SSA areas and 1 acre in SSA area and property must include a single or two-family residence.
- **Backyard burn PERMITS ARE REQUIRED.** Call the Monterey Bay Air Resources District at (831) 647-9411 to obtain a permit or to find out more information.
- Backyard burning season is December 1st – April 30th, however, the backyard burn season can be delayed, suspended or cut short at Cal Fire's discretion during wildfire season. Only when Cal Fire deems it safe to burn is backyard burning allowed.
- Only yard trimmings, clippings or prunings grown on the property are allowed to be burned. Under no circumstances is trash, construction debris, processed, treated, or painted lumber, plastics, vegetation from outside the permittee's property or other non-vegetative products allowed to be burned.
- Burn piles should be no larger than 4'x 4'
- Piles will be surrounded by a ten-foot circle cut to bare mineral soil
- Water must be available and located at the burn site
- An adult shall be in attendance at all times
- Burning hours are from 8-4 p.m. ONLY. No additional fuel is to be added to the burn pile after 3 p.m. The burn should be extinguished, and the burn area should be cool to the touch by 4 p.m.
- Burning is allowed only on permissive burn days as determined by the California Air Resources Board.
- Piles must be kept dry by covering them with a tarp to protect from moisture and precipitation.
- Burn only dry material.
- Piles of pine needles, leaves and tree stumps are not allowed to be burned.
- For safety purposes it is also critical that *poison oak never be burned.*
- For more information, burn requirements and to obtain a burn permit log onto: www.montereybaycleanair.org
- **To find out if it is a Burn Day call: 1-800-CAL-BURN**

From the home page go to: - > Permitting -> Open Burning Permits / Smoke Management -> Backyard Burn Permit Online Application.

Due to topographic, demographic, meteorological considerations and a high population of wood burning device use, the San Lorenzo Valley has a history and propensity of smoke impacts. For

these reasons San Lorenzo Valley is considered a Smoke Sensitive Area (SSA). Obtaining a backyard burn permit in a SSA involves additional requirements, restrictions and considerations.

There are 2 basic differences between Non-Smoke Sensitive Areas and San Lorenzo Valley Backyard Burn permits:

1. San Lorenzo Valley residents must have a minimum size parcel of 1 acre (verified by Assessor's Parcel) and property must include 1 or 2 permanent houses to qualify for a backyard burn permit. Properties with no permanent residential houses require a different permit. If your property does not have a residential house and is not considered an agricultural property, contact the local fire department to discuss other burn permit options.
2. In addition to having a Backyard Burn permit, prior to burning, San Lorenzo Valley residents must also obtain a daily Burn Authorization for the day they want to burn. The daily Burn Authorization can be obtained any time after 4 p.m. the day before burning. To minimize smoke impacts in the San Lorenzo Valley, only 5 backyard burns are allowed to be conducted PER FIRE DISTRICT each burn day in the SLV. The daily Burn Authorizations help track how many burns are occurring in SLV on any given burn day. Fire departments can log on to see exactly where the burns are located in their jurisdiction.

To find out the burn zone or fire jurisdiction your property lies within, or to obtain a burn permit, go to: www.montereybaycleanair.org

To see our Backyard Burn brochure:

- SLV Smoke Sensitive Area (SSA) residents only:
https://www.mbard.org/files/acf86aa78/BackyardBurnBrochure11-28-17_SLV.pdf or...
- All other areas (Non-SSA):
https://www.mbard.org/files/8319b8554/BackyardBurnBrochure_Non-SSA.pdf

On Which Days is Burning Allowed?

The California Air Resource Board (CARB) meteorologists' forecast for smoke dispersion and local weather conditions are used to determine if the following day is a "Burn Day" or "Non-Burn Day". If meteorological conditions are expected to be good for smoke dispersion, it will be declared a burn day. The Burn Day Status is determined by 4:00 pm the afternoon prior.

To view the Burn Day Status:

- Logging onto www.montereybaycleanair.com (click "Burn Day Status" at the top of the page)
- Call (800) CAL-BURN (800-225-2876) or
- Call CARB's burn day status hotline at (916) 445-0747

What is a Burn Zone?

- Topographic and climatic differences make fire and smoke behave differently. For this reason, areas within Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties have been divided into three burn zones: Coastal, Inland, and the San Lorenzo Valley - Smoke Sensitive Area. **It could be a "Burn Day" in one zone but a "No-Burn Day" in the other two zones, so know your zone.**

WHAT MORE CAN YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS DO TO REDUCE YOUR FIRE DANGER?

More information: Defensible Space – Ready for Wildfire