

MODULE 5

Burn Conditions

The following are burning conditions that apply to all burning throughout the County.

Burn Permit

Burn permits from AQMD: are required for piles larger than 4 feet by 4 feet, must be obtained prior to burning, and must be kept at the burn location during the burn. The Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) may revoke a permit if the permittee is not in compliance with any permit conditions. Burn Permits are good for one burning season and clearly state the expiration date on the permit.

Burn Days

Burning is prohibited on “No Burn” days designated primarily by the California Air Resources Board (ARB), sometimes by the fire agency with jurisdiction, and rarely by the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO). “No Burn” designations are based on air quality and/or fire danger; both are largely dependent on weather conditions. The ARB makes the determination daily based on the requirements of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, Subchapter 2.¹ The APCO may permit burning on “No Burn” days when denial of burning would result in imminent and substantial economic loss. Burning is prohibited during the fire season, typically July 1 until after the first good rain in autumn. To learn if it’s a “No Burn” day, permit holders must call the Burn Line West Slope: (530) 621-5897, South Lake Tahoe: (888) 332-2876 immediately prior to burning. All burning, whether or not it requires a Burn Permit, is prohibited on “No Burn” days, except for recreational or cooking fires and in some instances, prescribed burning (i.e., forest management burning by a public agency). Regardless of the burning status, if local weather conditions are not favorable (i.e., it’s windy), then DON’T BURN until conditions are favorable.

Acceptable Material

Dry vegetation, originating on the property, is the ONLY acceptable material. The material must also be free of dirt. Recreational or cooking fires, (which do not require burn permits) may use charcoal briquettes, untreated wood, or cooking fuels. Acceptable ignition devices include liquid petroleum gas, butane, propane, or diesel oil burners, flares, and other fuels that will not create black smoke. If you create a burn pile but don’t burn right away, cover the pile with a tarp to protect it from rainwater. Do NOT burn the tarp!

Burn Piles

Burn piles must be located away from structures and other flammable material and as far away from neighbors as possible. The pile must be arranged to burn with as little smoke as possible, typically in a “teepee” shape to ensure a hot and fast burn. Piles must be able to burn completely within one day. Burning must cease if smoke drifts into populated areas, becoming a nuisance. The use of burn barrels to burn anything is prohibited.

¹ Title 17, Subchapter 2 of the California Code of Regulations. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/Title17.pdf>