

JOHNSON CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

Policy # - 905.01

Section: Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement

Issued: April 23, 2010

Revised: November 2, 2010

Outdoor /Open Burning

I. Purpose

To provide fire code regulations to assist Johnson City Fire Department (JCFD) personnel and the public in understanding the policies concerning Outdoor Burning.

II. Definitions

Bonfire - A bonfire is a controlled outdoor fire used for informal disposal of burnable waste material or as part of a celebration.

Burn Barrel – A type of incinerator that is most often used to burn garbage or other types of waste.

Chiminea - A chiminea fireplace is an outdoor fireplace that has a bulbous or bowl-shaped main compartment with a single opening. From the top there is a single stack that allows exhaust to escape through the top, like a mini chimney. A chiminea fireplace is most often made of cast-iron, aluminum, ceramic, clay or terra, and is generally used to contain smaller fires.

Fire Pit - Is any temporary, permanent, or portable outdoor structure for containing an open fire. They come in a wide variety of types, everything from a circle of stones to a portable fire pit made of cast iron with a cover and/or grill. In general fire pits are a way to enjoy a camp fire style experience in the safety and comfort of a backyard.

Fireplace - An architectural element consisting of a space designed to contain a fire, generally for heating but sometimes also for cooking. The space where the fire is contained is called a firebox or fire pit; a chimney or other flue allows gas and particulate exhaust to escape the building. While most fireplaces are constructed in building interiors, sometimes outdoor fireplaces are created for evening warmth, outdoor cooking or decorative purposes.

Outdoor / Open Burning - The burning of unwanted materials such as paper, trees, brush, leaves, grass, and other debris, where smoke and other emissions are released directly into the air without passing through a chimney or stack. Open burning also includes incineration devices that do not control the combustion air to maintain an adequate temperature and do not provide sufficient time for complete combustion

Recreational Fire – An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes (*2006 International Fire Code*).

Treated Wood – Any wood product that has been treated with a preservative, paint, varnish or any applied finish.

Wood – Dry clean fuel such as twigs, branches, limbs, commercially made logs for heating, charcoal, cord wood or untreated lumber.

III. Guidelines

A. General

1. Any Open Burning shall be performed by the property owner and /or with written permission from the property owner.
2. Outdoor fires shall not be built, ignited or maintained in or upon hazardous fire areas when high winds are either forecast or present.
3. Open burning does not exempt or excuse a person from the consequences, damages or injuries which may result from such conduct, nor does it excuse or exempt any person from complying with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and orders of the federal government, the State of Tennessee and/or the City of Johnson City.
4. Open burning and/or recreational fires that are offensive or objectionable because of smoke or odor emissions or when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous shall be prohibited.
5. The fire should be constantly attended by an adult person knowledgeable in the use of fire extinguishing equipment and provide supervision until the fire has been totally extinguished.
6. Fire extinguishing equipment such as a fire extinguisher, garden hose, water filled buckets; shovel or similar means to smother the fire must be readily available.
7. The fuel load capacity of the containment area shall not exceed 3 feet or more in diameter or more than 2 feet in height. Recreational fires and fire pits shall not be located within 25 feet of a structure or combustible construction material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.
8. The fire must be ignited with an approved starter fuel. "Starter Fuels" mean dry, untreated, unpainted wood or charcoal fire starter. Paraffin candles and alcohols are permitted as starter fuels and as aids to ignition only. Propane gas torches or other clean gas burning devices causing minimal pollution may be used to start an open fire.
9. Only natural firewood or commercial logs may be burned. Reference definition of wood in section two.
10. Burning of the following is prohibited:
 - a. Toxic or hazardous materials or containers for such materials.
 - b. Rubber tires, asphaltic material, crankcase oil, impregnated wood, or similar materials
 - c. Paper, used lumber or trade waste.
 - d. Building and/or demolition material.

- e. Household/commercial trash or refuse.
- 11. Burning of tree trimmings, leaves, yard waste, paper, cardboard, garbage and similar rubbish is not permitted.
- 12. Burn barrels are not permitted in Residential, Commercial or Industrial settings.
- 13. The fire shall be completely extinguished after each use.

B. Recreational Fires

- 1. A permit is not required for recreational fires
- 2. Recreational Fires are prohibited between midnight (0000) and 7:00am (0700)
- 3. The recreational fire shall be built in an area free of excessive combustible materials.
- 4. No recreational fires will be permitted when the City of Johnson City or the State of Tennessee has officially declared a "burning ban" due to potential fire conditions or when the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation or Tennessee Division of Air Pollution Control has declared an air quality alert.
- 5. Recreational fires shall be placed where they are easy to contain and do not pose a threat to forests or other wildland areas.
- 6. The recreational fire must be started without using flammable liquids.
- 7. The recreational fire shall be fueled by clean wood or charcoal.
- 8. Burning of rubbish, trash, rubber, or any other processed material is prohibited.
- 9. The recreational fire shall be placed at least 25 ft from a structure, at least 25 feet from any other combustible and at least 25 feet from a property line.
- 10. Recreational fires are prohibited when high winds are forecast for the area.
- 11. Recreational fires shall be attended at all times by an adult.
- 12. Recreational fires shall not create smoke which can become a nuisance to neighbors.
- 13. The Johnson City Fire Department is authorized to extinguish a fire inside an outdoor fireplace and /or chiminea that is deemed to be unsafe or poses a hazard to any citizen, structure, or property.

C. Outdoor Fireplace and Chimeneas

- 1. A permit is not required for outdoor fireplaces
- 2. Have a fire extinguisher or a charged garden hose readily available.
- 3. Use of chimeneas or outdoor fireplaces inside the house, on a wooden deck, or in an enclosed porch or gazebo is prohibited.
- 4. The use of lighter fluid or gasoline as a fire igniter is prohibited. Use approved fire starter fuels only.
- 5. Burning of treated wood, pellets, or charcoal or other toxic materials is prohibited.
- 6. The chiminea or outdoor fireplace shall be placed in a spot that is clear of hanging trees, branches, brushes, or anything else that is flammable.
- 7. Position the chiminea or outdoor fireplace shall be placed on a flat and fireproof surface (rock, concrete, bricks)
- 8. No combustible material shall be around the chiminea or outdoor fireplace.
- 9. The fire shall never be left unattended.
- 10. The fire shall be extinguished after each use.
- 11. Johnson City Fire Department is authorized to extinguish a fire inside an outdoor fireplace and /or chiminea that is deemed to be unsafe or poses a hazard to any citizen, structure, or property.

D. Bonfires

1. Bonfire sites shall be inspected and approved by the Johnson City Fire Department Fire Marshal Division.
2. Only schools, civic and religious organizations shall be allowed to establish and maintain a bonfire in accordance with the guidelines established in this Standard Operating Guideline.
3. Anyone wishing to establish and maintain a bonfire shall contact the Johnson City Fire Department, Fire Marshal Division at 423-975-2840 no less than 5 days prior to the event.
4. A "**written permit**" is recommended for all bonfires
 - a. The permit application shall be submitted at least 5 days before the desired burn date.
 - b. The permit will be valid for the day of the bonfire only.
 - c. The permit may be revoked by the Fire Department Representative if unsafe conditions are forecast, or pose a significant hazard.
 - d. Only one bonfire shall be ignited at a time and shall not exceed 10' high x 10' wide x 10' long in size.
 - e. Only clean wood or firewood is allowed to be used as fuel.
 - f. If the applicant is not the property owner written permission shall be obtained from the property owner/representative (i.e. Principal is acceptable for school property)
5. A bonfire that is offensive or objectionable because of smoke or odor emissions or when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous shall be prohibited.
6. No bonfire shall be kindled or maintained within 50 feet of any structure, wooded area, or any other area that may be deemed as a hazard as determined by the Fire Marshal or Fire Officer. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 50 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.
7. Attendance. Bonfires shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher (minimum 4-A rating) or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization.
8. Extinguishment authority. The Johnson City Fire Department is authorized to order the extinguishment by the permit holder, another person responsible or the fire department of open burning that creates or adds to a hazardous or objectionable situation.

IV. Violation Procedures

When a violation of the open burning policy is suspected the following procedure should be followed.

1. **Fill out an Open Burning Violation Form**
2. **Verify identity by examining photo identification and a copy of all information needed for report.**
3. **Take photographs of the scene if possible and sign Violation Form**
4. **Ensure that all documentation is entered in Firehouse.**
5. **Refer the Violation to the Fire Marshal's office the next working day. There is no need for an emergency call out unless the event is a significant life safety hazard to the surrounding area.**