



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AREA FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE SEEING AN INCREASE IN CALLS FOR POSSIBLE ILLEGAL BURNING

Fire protection agencies and the local air quality agency are asking our community to review and follow outdoor burning rules due to an increase in calls for possible illegal burning. Now that spring and warmer weather conditions are here, many community members are resuming outdoor yard work and spring cleaning. To keep air quality clean and reduce area fire risk, **area agencies throughout all of Spokane County want to remind community members that burning of garbage, including construction material, and the use of burn barrels is prohibited statewide. Burning outdoors, including yard debris, is not allowed in most areas of Spokane County.**

Recreational fires are allowed at this time if requirements are met.

Outdoor burning regulations and requirements can be viewed at SpokaneCleanAir.org/burning.

"In 2020, Spokane Clean Air logged 379 outdoor burning complaints. That was an increase of 21% from the previous year. With the arrival of spring and the nicer weather, we are beginning to see an uptick in smoke complaints again this year," stated Scott K. Windsor, executive director for Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. "It's important to remember, breathing smoke affects the respiratory system and is especially harmful to sensitive populations including youth, seniors, and those with underlying heart and respiratory conditions."

Fire departments are experiencing an increase in call volume as well.

“Local air quality is imperative given the nature of all the conditions we are experiencing at this time. With the increase of smoke in the air, those with existing lung and heart complications are put at further risk.” Said Spokane Valley Fire Department Fire Marshal, Greg Rogers. “Equally, First Responders and our community are being put at risk, with the large number of responses for illegal burning.”

“Every Spring Spokane Fire Department sees an increase in calls related to recreational burning in our jurisdiction,” said Spokane Fire Department Fire Marshal, Lance Dahl. “Warmer weather provides an opportunity to remind community members that it is never legal to burn yard waste, construction materials, or household debris. Be a good neighbor when burning recreationally.”

Recreational fires that get out-of-control are a common cause of wildfires caused by people. A person can be held financially responsible for the cost of fire department response and any property damage caused.

“Be Fire Smart” and follow the burning requirements:

- Only burn clean, dry firewood or manufactured logs,
- Recreational fires cannot be used for disposal of anything, including natural yard/garden vegetation,
- Burn 25’ away from any structure, like a house, garage, or fence,
- Have an extinguisher or charged water hose nearby,
- Stay near the fire,
- Fires can be no larger than 3’ wide and 2’ tall, and
- Put out the fire completely!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local fire departments and first responders are working diligently to protect our health so that we can protect our community. Please help by considering voluntarily limiting wood burning (indoors and outdoors). Many people in our communities are also extremely concerned about their respiratory health. Before starting an indoor or outdoor burn of any type, please consider the potential impacts on neighbors and local emergency responders.

Typically, during July through September outdoor burning is restricted by fire officials due to fire danger. Always check current burn conditions before starting any fire. For information on current burn conditions, visit <https://www.spokanecleanair.org/current-burning-conditions> or call the Burn Status hotline at (509) 477-4710.

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