

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is open burning prohibited?

Burning produces particulate matter that adversely impacts our air quality. It causes irritation to the lungs and decreases breathing capabilities for people with lung problems. It especially affects seniors, young children, and people with lung disease.

Can I have a campfire in my backyard?

Yes, recreational fires in a fire pit or outdoor fireplace up to a certain size are allowed without a permit. However, there are cases when a permit may be required.



When do I need a permit?

You need a permit if you are having a legal fire that is on the ground, not contained in an acceptable fire pit or fireplace, or larger than 3 feet long by 3 feet wide by 3 feet high. Permits are available on our website at louisvilleky.gov/apcd. Call 574-6000 to request an application through mail or fax.

Which fires don't need a permit?

If you are grilling or cooking food for non-commercial purposes and the fire is the appropriate size for what you are cooking, you will not need a permit. Recreational fires in a fire pit or outdoor fireplace do not require permits if they fall within the size requirements— 3 feet wide by 3 feet long by 3 feet tall.

Should I notify the fire department?

Louisville urban and suburban fire districts want to be notified when you are going to have a fire that requires a permit. For some burns you may also need to supply your fire district with a burn permit application.

Can I dispose of tree debris from storms or flooding by burning it?

No. Burning storm and/or flood debris is prohibited. After major weather events check with Metro311 or at www.louisvilleky.gov to find out if there are any special allowances made for disposal at local recycling centers, landfills, or other community drop off sites.

Renting a chipper to turn limbs and branches into mulch for your yard is a great way to recycle those trees. You may also contact a professional to dispose of the tree debris.

General Rules & Requirements

- You may only burn clean, dry firewood. Burning trash and yard waste is illegal in Louisville/Jefferson County.
- Without a permit, recreational fires in a fire pit or outdoor fireplace may be up to 3 feet long by 3 feet wide by 3 feet high.
- With a permit, recreational fires in a fire pit or outdoor fireplace may be up to 5 feet long by 5 feet wide by 5 feet high.
- An APCD permit must be obtained for any other legal fire that is not in an approved fire pit. This includes agricultural fires and fire-fighting training.
- You may not use accelerants.

- Even legal burns are not allowed on Air Quality Alert days, or when there is a county, regional, or statewide burn ban in effect. You may call 574-6000 to check.
- You may not burn if the wind is expected to exceed 15 MPH.
- Always contact the fire department 2 hours prior to starting a fire that required a permit to notify them of your intent to burn.
- APCD regulations prohibit smoke and odors from becoming a nuisance.
- For more, review APCD Regulation 1.11 at www.louisvilleky.gov/apcd.

Resources

If you plan to burn, it is your responsibility to know and follow open burning rules and regulations and to obtain any required permits. If needed, the APCD is happy to help you through the process. Call us at 574-6000, email airburn@louisvilleky.gov, or utilize the resources below.



Open Burning in Louisville



APCD Regulation 1.11
Control of Open Burning



Permit Applications &
How to Apply

Fire Pits in Louisville/ Jefferson County

A fire pit is an acceptable permanent or portable outdoor receptacle or device that meets certain specifications.

Although recreational fires in acceptable pits are generally allowed without a permit, you cannot burn when there is an Air Quality Alert in effect, when there is a burn ban in effect, or when the wind is expected to exceed 15 MPH. You can call the APCD at 574-6000 to check before you burn.



We have listed some guidelines to help you determine what kind of fire pit you should purchase or build, and where you should place it on your property.

Manufactured Fire Pits

Manufactured fire pits are now widely available. Although you can purchase just about any size or shape, certain Air Pollution Control District specifications must be met.

The height of a fire pit should not exceed 3 feet from the ground or surface upon which it rests. The inside width, or burn area, cannot exceed 3 feet wide by 3 feet long, or 3 feet in diameter for round pits.



Permanently Built Fire Pits

In order to be used without a permit, permanently constructed fire pits need to meet certain specifications. Fire pit height cannot exceed 3 feet, and the fire pit opening, or burn area, cannot be larger than 3 feet wide by 3 feet long, or 3 feet in diameter.



It must have enclosed sides made from brick, block, stone, heavy-gauge metal, or some other APCD-approved non-combustible material, and be built in such a way that the pit becomes a permanent structure.

Fire Pit Safety Guidance

- Placement of a fire pit is as important as how it is constructed. Safety always comes first.
- The fire pit should not be placed on a wooden deck or other combustible surface. Do not place on a balcony.
- The state fire code requires fire pits to be located at least 50 feet from buildings, property lines, and combustible materials.
- The fire should be attended by a responsible adult at all times.
- Your fire pit should have a screen or spark arrestor.
- Always have water nearby to put out your fire.

Open Burning Regulations

Louisville & Jefferson County



(502) 574-6000 | air@louisvilleky.gov
louisvilleky.gov/apcd



AIR POLLUTION
CONTROL DISTRICT