

Frequently Asked Questions

Control of Open Burning Ordinance

- ***Can I have a campfire in my backyard. Is that Allowed?***
 - Recreational fires are allowed. Depending on the kind of fire you want to have, a permit may be required.
- ***When do I need a permit?***
 - You will need a permit if you are having a bonfire or recreational fire that is on the ground, not contained in an acceptable fire pit or fireplace.
- ***What types of fires do not 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. Fires can be no longer than 3 feet wide by 3 feet long by 3 feet tall.
 - Any other kind and size of recreational fire will need a permit.
- ***How do I get a permit?***
 - Permit application forms are available at the Shelbyville Fire Department, Station 1, 1040 Main Street or by calling 633-7101.
- ***Does it cost money?***
 - No. The Shelbyville Fire Department supplies the burn permits free of charge.
- ***What is an approved fire pit?***
 - A fire pit is a device built or manufactured for small recreational fires. A portable, above ground fire pit should be commercially manufactured and assembled and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. A permanently constructed fire pit or fireplace must be constructed or completely lined with a non-combustible material such as brick, rock, concrete, or heavy gauge metal. The burn pit requires a spark guard.
 - Most commercially manufactured ones will be acceptable. Constructed fire pits may not be acceptable, check with the Fire Department when in doubt.
- ***What if I have already built a fire pit? Will it be approved?***
 - Not necessarily. Fire Pits must consist of non-combustible materials. They must be a size that a fire no larger than 3 ft tall by 3 ft wide by 3 feet long can be burned at any one time. If it cannot be approved, you still be able to use it for burning recreational fires with a permit. Check with the fire department when in doubt.
- ***What can I burn?***
 - Only clean, dry firewood is allowed for any recreational fire.
 - Burning of garbage or trash, plastic, rubber, grass or tree trimmings, brush, painted or treated wood or lumber, or any kind of construction or demolition debris is strictly prohibited.

- ***When can I burn?***
 - If you are using an approved fire pit or fireplace you can burn almost any time you want. If the fire is not contained in an approved fire pit, you may only burn when noted on your approved permit/ application. The exception to this is when the wind is blowing at 15mph or higher, or if there is an Air Quality Alert in effect, or some type of burn ban has been put into effect. These events will be noted on the City of Shelbyville web site, or you may call the Fire Department for more information.
- ***What's a chimenea?***
 - A chimenea is a device, usually made of some type of clay or ceramic material, designed for small fires. These small fireplaces usually have a short chimney of some kind.
- ***Why can I have a fire pit and not a barrel?***
 - A fire pit is designed to hold small recreational fires. This limits the amount, size and type of materials that can be burned. Most people who use fire pits use them for recreational purposes and use clean dry firewood. Barrels are used largely to dispose of material not approved by the fire department and will cause large amounts of smoke when used, due to the lack of ventilation. Barrels promote disposal of construction materials, trash and yard waste. All prohibited under the Federal Clean Air Act.
- ***I want to have a pig roast. Nothing in the regulation says if I can or cannot.***
 - The regulations allow you to have a cooking fire that is sufficient for the amount of food you are cooking. Therefore, a fire that is large enough to cook a pig is allowed, for cooking purpose only.
- ***I want to clean up my yard. Is it ok to burn those branches and trees?***
 - No, yard waste or debris is prohibited. You may use dry cut wood and you may use kindling for starting a fire. Having a fire with the purpose of disposing of yard waste is not allowed. Contact the Shelbyville Public Works or Shelby County Recycling to properly dispose of yard waste.
- ***What if my neighbor is burning stuff in their yard?***
 - You can report illegal burn activities to the Shelbyville Fire Department.
- ***Can someone have a small fire to keep warm while working at a construction site?***
 - This activity is permitted under the Kentucky Open Burn statutes and the outside temperature is below freezing 32 degrees F.