

Guidelines for Agricultural Waste Burning

in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties



Why is Smoke a Concern?

Smoke from burning dry vegetation is a significant source of air contaminants including volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, fine particulate matter, and carbon monoxide. Smoke can cause a nuisance and adverse health impacts to your neighbors.

Composting, chipping, hauling material to landfills where it will be chipped, and goat grazing are all cleaner disposal methods for agricultural waste.

Burn Smart to Avoid Costly Violations

Burning on “no-burn” days, burning prohibited materials, or otherwise violating the open burning regulations may result in fines or penalties.

For Additional Information Contact Us:

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-9411 (phone)

Daily Burn Day Status Hotline:
(800) CAL-BURN or (800) 225-2876



www.montereybaycleanair.org



Agricultural Waste Burning Requirements

Air District Rule 438 "Open Outdoor Fires" regulates the air emissions from all outdoor fires in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties.

What is Agricultural Waste Burning?

Agricultural waste burning is the use of open fires to dispose of agricultural waste. The waste must have resulted from natural vegetation grown on the land or be associated with growing and harvesting of crops in the field.

What are Alternatives to Burning?

The District encourages everyone to use alternative methods to dispose of vegetation. Alternatives include composting, chipping, or taking vegetation and woody wastes to landfills.

Who Can Burn Agricultural Waste?

If you derive an income from a commercial agricultural operation you are eligible to burn agricultural waste. An agricultural operation is a person, partnership, educational institution or corporation engaged in the clearing and preparation of land for the purpose of growing and harvesting crops or raising fowl or animals for providing a livelihood, commercial sale, education or research; or a person, partnership, educational institution or corporation engaged in the management of range or forest lands for purposes of research, education, silviculture, grazing and habitat improvement.

What is a Burn Day?

Burn days are designated by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). Each day the ARB examines weather patterns to predict whether the smoke from fires will dissipate safely. If the answer is yes, that day is declared a burn day. Check the burn day status by calling 1-800-CAL-BURN (1-800-225-2876) or online at: www.montereybaycleanair.org.

Due to differences in the coastal and inland climates, our area has been separated into five Burn Zones (30,31,32,33,34). Each day you want to burn, check if your specific burn zone is a burn day.

How Do I Get a Permit?

A burn permit or smoke management permit is required to conduct an agricultural burn. Contact your local Fire Department or the Air District to obtain a permit. The Air District permit application is available online at: www.montereybaycleanair.org.

What is a Daily Burn Authorization?

Daily burn authorizations are required prior to conducting any agricultural burning. You must request and receive authorization to burn prior to igniting your fire. You can do this on the day you want to burn or starting at 4:00 pm the day prior to burning. Contact the agency that issued your permit (Fire Department or Air District) and request authorization to burn using the online system or by telephone.



How Can I Burn Clean?

The following guidelines can help you burn clean while reducing smoke impacts to your neighbors.

- ⇒ Avoid creating a public nuisance and being cited and fined by extinguishing your fire immediately if the smoke from your fire begins to affect your neighbors or nearby roads.
- ⇒ Vegetation must be free of garbage, plastic, painted or treated wood, tires, tar paper, demolition debris. Try to avoid burning poison oak.
- ⇒ To avoid smoldering fires, the material to be burned must be reasonably free of dirt and soil and visible surface moisture. Stack the material loosely to allow air to circulate freely.
- ⇒ After a recent rain, if the material to be burned is wet, allow the pile to dry before burning. Covering dried materials can prevent this delay.
- ⇒ Tree stumps six inches or larger in diameter must dry at least 180 days before burning.
- ⇒ Trees and branches two inches or greater in diameter, but less than six inches must be dried for at least 60 days before burning.
- ⇒ Trees and branches less than two inches in diameter and plant trimmings must be dried for at least 30 days before burning.
- ⇒ Waste from field crops that are cut in a green condition must be dried at least 10 days before burning.