

# Open Burning and Disposal of Wooden Structures Guideline

## Objective

This guideline is intended to assist with the environmentally responsible disposal of wooden structures.

## Application

Although this guideline primarily applies to the disposal of wooden structures through planned open burning it may apply to waste wood material resulting from severe weather disasters and to fire fighting for training purposes.

The Ministry of Environment promotes recycling and reusing Construction and Demolition Waste. Environment's factsheet regarding Construction and Demolition Waste Recycling and Disposal can be found at the Ministry of Environment's website under Programs & Services/Waste Management/Solid Waste Management.

For links to information on the environmental and human health effects of air pollution and safe burning conditions please go to the Ministry of Environment's website under Programs & Services/Air

## Background

This guideline outlines the requirements for burning of wood products derived from the demolition of wood buildings and structures. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment encourages the recycling and reuse of salvageable construction materials. However, some elevators or other structures may be too large for demolition and disposal by conventional methods or have been used for purposes that make the building material unsuitable for reuse. The waste wood in these buildings may be burned, provided measures are taken to minimize the environmental impact.

Open burning of unwanted material can pollute the air, obscure visibility and cause odour and health problems. *The Clean Air Regulations* prohibit the open burning of certain products that may be contained in building materials. Prohibited materials must be removed prior to burning.

## Requirements

At least two weeks prior to the burn:

- The mayor, administrator or council should be informed of the intention to demolish the structure. If the administrator of a municipality is notified he/she should inform the representative(s) of the hamlet or village where the structure is located.
- The contractor responsible for the project must acquire all appropriate demolition permits.
- If the building is located within 4.5 km of a provincial forest with a planned burn date between April 1st to October 31st, a free

Ministry of Environment burning permit must be obtained from the local forest protection office.

- At least one week prior to the burn:
- The local fire department, RCMP and Ministry of Environment field office should be informed of the approximate date of the burn.
- Segregate any materials such as:
  - ~ railway ties and other wood treated with wood preservatives;
  - ~ rubber and plastic, vinyl siding, asphalt shingles, carpets and vinyl flooring;
  - ~ asbestos and asbestos roofing material;
  - ~ trash or garbage;
  - ~ motor vehicle tires; and
  - ~ hazardous substances and/or hazardous wastes as defined in The Hazardous Substances and Waste Dangerous Goods Regulations.
- Non-combustible materials should be segregated from the burn where possible. Noncombustibles that cannot be segregated from the burn materials should be removed from the burn pit, post-burning.

**•Burn Location and Specifications:**

- A burn pit is required that is at least 500 metres from any residential property.
- The burn pit must be a minimum of 10 metres X 10 metres X 3 metres deep.
- The pit should be surrounded by a 3 metre berm on at least 3 sides.
- The fire should take place during daylight hours between two hours after sunrise to two hours before sunset.
- The fire must not be ignited if the prevailing wind will carry smoke and/or odours towards occupied residences, cause a public nuisance or impair visibility on public roadways.
- At no time should the fire be ignited during windy conditions. Should a strong wind develop during the burn the fire must be extinguished and the burn pit covered with clean fill. This will reduce the possibility of the fire spreading to nearby areas and/or properties.
- The fire must be attended and supervised at all times. The fire must be extinguished before the person(s) carrying out the burn leaves the site.
- Sufficient fire fighting equipment must be on-site to control the fire during the burn and to extinguish the fire when the burn is complete.

## More info?

Contact the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment  
Client Service Office at  
Tel: 1-800-567-4224  
(toll-free in North America)  
or 306-787-2584.  
Email: [centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca](mailto:centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca)