

Open Fire Ordinance

The Open Fire Ordinance was passed by the City Council on Monday, September 27, 2010.

WHEREAS, the City of Bloomington, Illinois does not allow the burning of combustible material within the City limits and

WHEREAS, the City has determined controls and guidelines are needed for recreational fires, including those used for cooking, for the safety and well being of the public, and

WHEREAS, the City intends to hereby set forth clearly and concisely the restrictions so imposed in order to inform all residents of the City of Bloomington as to said restrictions.

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED:

A. Within the city of limits of Bloomington, no person shall burn any garbage, solid waste, commercial solid waste, yard waste, household waste, junk, refuse, rubbish, construction waste, hazardous waste, buildings or structures.

B. The use of outdoor grills and barbecues for cooking is permitted.

C. Recreational fires shall be allowed in approved containers or fire pits.

D. Recreational fire shall be defined as an outdoor fire whose purpose is for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

1. For the purpose of this section, approved container shall be defined as a device specifically designed for the use of burning wood or charcoal, including but not limited to portable fireplaces, fire pits or chimineas. All portable devices shall be equipped with a spark arrestor (i.e. screen or chimney). The approved container may not be larger than forty-two (42) inches in diameter. The use of devices made of stone, metal, or ceramic construction designed for the purpose of containing a fire shall also be permitted provided the total fuel area does not exceed 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height. Wood contained in permissible fires shall be no more than 3 feet in length.
2. No approved container shall be located within eight (8) feet of a structure or public way. No approved fire pit shall be located within twenty five (25) feet of a structure or public way.
3. Only clean, dry firewood or charcoal may be used for recreational fires. Construction materials or yard waste are strictly prohibited. The use of flammable or combustible liquids, other than commercially produced charcoal lighter fluid, to start the fire is strictly prohibited.
4. All recreational fires shall be constantly attended by a responsible adult until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a 4-A rating or a functional garden hose attached to a functional water source shall be available for immediate use.
5. All recreational fires have maximum time limit of 4 hours and shall be properly extinguished at the end of activities or time limit. Regardless of when the fire was initiated it is not allowed to extend later than 11:00 p.m. and may begin no earlier than 7:00 a.m.
6. The fire shall be immediately extinguished any time wind conditions become strong (at or above 15 MPH or greater) or if there are sustained wind gusts in excess of 20 MPH, or if the wind begins to carry brands or embers creating a potential for fire extension.

E. Bonfires may be allowed only for officially sponsored activities of civic, educational and religious organizations. Bonfires are not approved for the general public. Allowed bonfires are subject to the following conditions:

1. The organization requesting the bonfire must submit a map of the burn site to the Bloomington Fire Department for review a minimum of 7 business days prior the event. The site map must show emergency access points to the site (i.e. roads, parking lots, alleys, etc.) burn sites proximity to buildings/structures, location of hydrants, and approximate number and location of participants.
2. The organization requesting the bonfire must obtain a burn permit (\$50.00) from the Bloomington Fire Department at least 48 hours prior to the lighting of the bonfire. A fire department official will need to inspect the site the day of the burn.
3. The location of the bonfire shall be no closer than 50 feet to any structure, tree, shrub or combustible material and provisions shall be made to prevent the fire from spreading to within 50 feet of any structure or combustible material.
4. The Organization requesting the bonfire will appoint a minimum of 2 adults to act as bonfire supervisors throughout the entire event. These supervisors shall each have a means of communication (cell phone, etc.) to alert the Fire Department in the event of any issues.
5. The fuel for the bonfire shall consist only of clean, dry non-treated lumber or firewood stacked no more than 10 feet in height and with a diameter of not to exceed 10 feet at the base of the pile.
6. The use of flammable or combustible liquids, other than commercially produced charcoal lighter fluid, to start the fire is strictly prohibited. Small amounts of paper and kindling should be used. Only dedicated bonfire supervisors will initiate the fire.
7. No one, except the bonfire supervisors and/or emergency personnel shall be allowed within 10 feet of the bonfire throughout the duration of the event. Adequate security measures must be in place to prevent the audience from encroaching on the pile.
8. The bonfire shall be properly extinguished at the end of activities, but in any case will not be allowed after 11:00 p.m.
9. The bonfire can be suspended or cancelled at any time during the event if wind conditions become strong (15 MPH or greater) or if there are sustained gusts in excess of 20 MPH, or if the wind begins to carry brands or embers creating a potential for fire extension. Bonfires identified as offensive or objectionable due to excessive smoke or odor emissions may be extinguished by fire department officials.

F. The Fire Chief/Police Chief or their designee may prohibit any type of burning that becomes a nuisance based on complaints of irritation of eyes or breathing of others, when the atmospheric conditions or local conditions make such fires hazardous and may order the extinguishment of any fire which creates or adds to a hazardous or objectionable situation.