



DC Fire & EMS Fire Prevention Division
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Open Burning & Portable Fire Pits

WHAT IS OPEN BURNING?

In the District of Columbia, open burning is describe as the burning of materials wherein products of combustion are emitted directly into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Open burning does not include road flares, smudge pots and similar devices associated with safety or occupational uses typically considered open flames or recreational fires. For the purpose of this definition, a chamber shall be regarded as enclosed when, during the time combustion occurs, only apertures, ducts, stacks, flues or chimneys necessary to provide combustion air and permit the escape of exhaust gas are open.

An operational permit is required from the DC Fire & EMS Fire Prevention Division when a person wants to engage in open burning practices. *DCMR 12H, Section F-107.10.28.*

WHAT IS A RECREATIONAL FIRE?

In the District of Columbia, a recreational fire is an outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

Portable fire pits are considered appliances that are commonly used to house recreational fires in a controlled environment. They are allowed to be used in the District of Columbia. These appliances shall not be used within 15 of structures and only used on a noncombustible surface. It is mandatory that all manufacturers use instructions be followed for their safe use and operation.

