

What is a forest fire?

Section 26.01, Wis. Statutes, defines a forest fire as “uncontrolled, wild or running fires occurring on forest, marsh, field, cut over or other lands or involving farm, city or village property and improvements incidental to the uncontrolled, wild or running fires occurring on forest, marsh, field, cut over or other lands.”

Why is a burning permit required?

Burning permits are required to regulate the open burning of materials during times when a forest fire hazard exists and to provide the Fire Department and Sheriff’s Department a method of determining which fires are authorized and which ones may be a forest fire.

What are the risks of burning?

You may be found guilty of either civil or criminal charges when burning outside of Wisconsin Laws. In addition, if your fire escapes and becomes a forest fire, you will be charged for all costs of extinguishing the fire and, in civil action, may be charged for twice the value of any property damaged or destroyed.

Things you can do to burn safely.

Do not burn without fire fighting tools such as a shovel, rake and water hose or buckets of water at the site of the burn.

A non-combustible firebreak of 5 feet should surround the material to be burned.

Don’t burn if the wind is stronger than 8 miles per hour or if the weather forecast indicates the wind will increase during the time you burn.

Keep the size of your fire small. If you have a larger pile of brush or other materials to burn, consider starting a separate fire and putting the material on the fire a little at a time.

Don’t ever leave your fire unattended, even for a brief period of time! When you are done burning, make sure the fire is completely out before leaving the scene.

Fire can hold over in roots, stumps or other material and be rekindled at a later time. If that happens, you are still responsible for any costs or damage. Even if you have taken all the necessary precautions, check the site several times a day for several days after burning, just to be sure the fire is completely out. There have been instances of fires smoldering for up to a month after they were supposedly put out.

It is suggested that when you notify the sheriff’s department of your intention to burn, you give them the contact name and phone number of person(s) to contact in case the fire appears to be out of control. If the Fire Department is dispatched because your contact is not available, you will be responsible for charges for the response of the Fire Department.

Remember

Open burning is not a right! It is a privilege and can be taken away.

You are responsible for damages and costs if your fire gets away.