
What is Agricultural Waste Burning?

It refers to "open burning in agricultural operations in the growing of crops or raising of fowls or animals". It includes some materials related to the growing and harvesting of crops and which are used in the field.

What are Alternatives to Burning?

Because burning can release a substantial amount of air pollution, the Air Pollution Control District encourages everyone to use alternative methods to dispose of natural vegetation when feasible. These include composting, chipping or taking natural vegetation and woody wastes to landfills where the material is diverted to make mulch or transported to facilities that burn woody waste to generate electricity. Some landfills in the area accept woody waste at a much lower disposal fee than regular garbage. Also, there are programs through the Agricultural Commissioners for recycling plastic containers.

Who May Burn Agricultural Wastes?

You may be able to burn agricultural wastes, if you operate an agricultural operation. The agricultural wastes must have resulted from natural vegetation grown on the land, or are associated with growing and harvesting crops in the field. You must have a valid permit to conduct agricultural waste burning from your local fire agency.

What Can I Burn?

If you have followed the guidelines contained in this pamphlet completely, you may be allowed to burn agricultural wastes on your commercial property, including natural vegetation grown on the land, and some wastes associated with growing and harvesting crops on that land (for more information, see "How Must I Burn?")

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.

Whom do I Contact to be Able to Burn?

Contact your local fire department to obtain a permit for agricultural waste burning, to determine the size and number of burn piles that can be burned on your property safely each ARB-declared burn day, and to find out what other restrictions may be imposed by your local fire agency.

When May I Burn?

- The hours during which you may burn depend on the permit issued by your local fire agency. It must be an ARB-declared burn day.
- Call 1-800-CAL-BURN to learn if it's a burn day. The declarations for the next day are usually posted by 4 P.M. the previous day.

How Must I Burn?

These guidelines can help you to burn while reducing the smoke's impact on 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.
- ▶ The vegetation must be free from combustible impurities such as garbage, plastic, painted or treated wood, tires, tar paper, demolition debris, etc. 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.
- ▶ Avoid burning leaves and other small material which can become tightly compacted, retain moisture, and smolder when burning. This type of material can easily be disposed of in your weekly garbage pick-up. Check with your disposal service about curbside yard waste pick-up.
- ▶ When possible, ignite the pile on the downwind side. This allows the material to burn more thoroughly and gives better control of the fire.
- ▶ Tree stumps six inches (6") or larger in diameter must dry at least 180 days before burning.
- ▶ Trees and branches two inches (2") or greater in diameter, but less than six inches (6") must be dried for at least 60 days before burning.
- ▶ Trees and branches less than two inches (2") in diameter and plant trimmings must be dried for at least 30 days before burning.
- ▶ Wastes from field crops that are cut in a green condition must be dried at least 10 days before burning.

What About Other Kinds of Burning?

This Air Pollution Control District has separate requirements and guidelines designed to accommodate farmers, ranchers, homeowners, and others who need to burn vegetation. These types of burns include development burns, forest management burns, prescribed burns, range improvement burns, wildland vegetation management burns, and residential yard-waste burns. Please contact the District's Compliance Division at 647-9411 for information on these other types of burning.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
Compliance Division
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-9411 (phone)
(831) 647-8501 (FAX)
<http://www.mbuapcd.org> (District Web site)

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

ARB Forecast Line (916) 322-6014

Monterey Bay Unified APCD
24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-9411
Fax: (831) 647-8501

Guidelines for Agricultural Waste Burning

in Monterey, San Benito,
and Santa Cruz Counties



**Monterey Bay Unified Air
Pollution Control District**
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