

Fact Sheet

How to apply for a DEQ Open-burn letter permit

When is an open-burn Letter Permit required?

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulations prohibit certain types of burning in selected areas of the state. In cities larger than 4,000 people outside the Willamette Valley, air quality rules prohibit the open burning of commercial, construction, demolition, slash burning outside of the Department of Forestry's jurisdiction, and land-clearing debris within three miles of the city limits. Similar restrictions apply in prescribed areas in the Rogue Valley (Medford to Grants Pass), the Umpqua basin (Myrtle Creek to Sutherlin) and along the southern Oregon coast (Reedsport, Coos Bay, Coquille and Brookings).



Prevent smoldering fires!

In the Willamette Valley the restriction on these types of burning, including residential household burning, applies within three miles of cities over 1,000 population. The restricted area extends to six miles for Willamette Valley cities with over 45,000 people. The burning of industrial waste anywhere in the state is prohibited without a permit from DEQ.

A permit is also required for any material to be burned that has been moved off the property of origin.

Under rare circumstances, when no other means of disposal is available or is severely restricted, DEQ may issue a letter permit to allow the burning of these kinds of waste in the restricted areas.

How to qualify

To qualify for a DEQ open-burn letter permit you must first obtain a permit to burn the debris

from your local fire department. In addition you will be asked to provide the following information:

- A listing of alternative material disposal methods other than burning;
- The approximate cost of each alternative disposal method;
- The quantity and type of material to be burned.
- The anticipated amount of time it will take for the material to be completely burned;
- The methods proposed to ensure a safe, efficient and complete burn;
- The location of the proposed burn site;
- A diagram showing the proposed burn site, structures and facilities near the proposed burn site and the distances between the structures and facilities at the proposed burn site;
- If the application is for prescribed burning of vegetation to create or restore a wetland or to promote or enhance habitat for indigenous plants or animal, a statement from a federal or state agency recommending the open burn must be included;
- The anticipated need to dispose of similar material by burning in the future;
- Any other information the applicant feels may be relevant in determining the necessity of issuing an open-burn permit.

Please submit the information listed above to the nearest DEQ office that handles applications for open-burn letter permits. Offices are listed on the back.

Use good burn practices to promote an efficient burn and prevent excessive smoke:

- Assure that all combustible material is dry and/or seasoned (leaves and needles are brown). This may include covering the combustible material to protect from moisture (including precipitation or dew).
- Avoid igniting a large pile. Begin with a small pile to establish a hot bed of coals, and feed additional combustible material while maintaining a hot fire, free of excessive smoke. A combustion promoting fan is very effective on large land-clearing debris burns. Eliminate dirt, rocks or other noncombustible material from the burn pile prior to igniting.
- Periodically re-stack or feed the burning pile to ensure that combustion is robust and essentially completed.



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

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Air Quality Division

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TTY: (503) 229-6993

Good fire-control practice

Not only can fires have adverse health effects, they can also spread into dangerous wildfires. Follow these guidelines to minimize the risk of wildfire:

- Move all burnable materials at least ten feet away from a fire
- Do not build a fire on windy days
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Always have adequate water available and a rake or shovel on hand
- Always make sure the fire is completely extinguished before leaving the area

For More Information

For more information on DEQ's open burning regulations in your area, contact your local DEQ office.

NW Oregon/Portland

700 NE Multnomah St.
Portland, OR 97232
Phone: 503-229-5600
Fax: 503-229-6945

Willamette Valley

4026 Fairview Industrial Dr.
Salem, OR 97302
Phone: 503-378-8240
Fax: 503-373-7944

Central Oregon

475 NE Bellevue, Suite 110
Bend, OR 97701
Phone: 541-388-6146
Fax: 541-388-8283

Eastern Oregon

700 SE Emigrant
Suite 330
Pendleton, OR 97801
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Fax: 541-278-0168

South Coast

381 N 2nd St.
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Phone: 541-269-2721
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Southern Oregon

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Suite 201
Medford, OR 97501
Phone: 541-776-6010
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