Residential Burn Barrels: A Source of Toxic Pollution

How does burning household waste produce toxic air pollution?
Burn barrels are inefficient and polluting; they produce low temperature fires that receive very little oxygen. They also produce a lot of smoke (finely divided particulate matter) and many toxic substances. Virtually all of the pollutants are released into the air close to ground level, where they are easily inhaled.

What materials can be burned?
Untreated wood, paper and natural vegetative materials can be safely burned.

Burning the following materials is illegal anytime, anywhere in Oregon:

- Asbestos
- Asphalt
- Auto parts (including frames)
- Dead animals
- Plastic and rubber products
- Tires
- Waste oil, petroleum materials
- Wet garbage and food waste
- Material creating dense smoke or noxious odors.

Burning prohibited materials can result in serious fines. For more information on Oregon’s open burning rules and recycling options, contact DEQ.

Complaints
Please call your local fire department to report an open burning complaint. You may also contact DEQ’s complaint hotline at 888-997-7888 or submit a complaint online at https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Get-Involved/Pages/File-Pollution-Complaint.aspx

Alternative formats
DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

Last updated: 2/15/2019