



# Open Burning in Boulder County

*What you need to know about open burning in Boulder County.*

Open burning releases large amounts of fine particulates and carbon monoxide - major pollutants in the Front Range/Denver Metro Area - contributing to the "Brown Cloud." Fine particulate pollutants are a health risk when they are inhaled deeply into a person's lungs because they can become trapped and cause bronchitis, aggravate asthma, and worsen other lung diseases. Carbon Monoxide can bind with hemoglobin in the blood and prevent the transport of oxygen.

Open burning is regulated by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) enforces those regulations. Regulations prohibit any open burning without a permit. Burn permits for residents are available for burning branches or slash piles only. Prescribed burns of more than 50 slash piles or 5 acres or more of grass or mixed fuels will be permitted by CDPHE.

## **SPRING/SUMMER FALL SLASH BURNS (MARCH 1 – OCTOBER 31)**

- Permits are issued for the burning of slash (branches less than 3" in diameter) piles **only**.
- Permits are valid for the entire burn season (March 1 - October 31) for piles approved at the time of application. New projects/piles require a new permit.
- All permitted burning activities must be started two hours after sunrise and completed two hours before sunset.
- Burning for the control of noxious weeds may be allowed with authorization from Boulder County Open Space, CSU Cooperative Extension, or the City of Boulder Open Space. BCPH form BC-02 must be submitted.

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/health/envIRON/airquality/pdfs/planburn.pdf>

## **WINTER WILDFIRE MITIGATION BURNS (NOVEMBER 1- MARCH 31)**

Burning slash from wildfire mitigation projects is allowed during the high pollution season (November 1 – March 31). Projects must meet ALL of the following conditions:

- The burn must be at an elevation of 6,400 feet or higher.
- Only clean, dry slash (branches 6" or less in diameter) can be burned. No stumps, logs, or trunks are allowed.
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- Materials to be burned (wood debris or slash) were generated from hazardous fuel reduction activities (thinning, defensible space, and forest health).
- Burning cannot take place during an Air Quality Alert Day, as determined by the CDPHE Air Pollution Control Division. Call 303-758-4848 or go to [www.colorado.gov/airquality/advisory.aspx](http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/advisory.aspx) for air pollution forecasts.
- Burning can only occur between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Fires must be completely out, with no residual smoke, by 4:00 p.m.

## **RESTRICTIONS**

- The burning of trash, leaves, cut weeds, grasses, lumber, construction debris or stumps, is NOT allowed in Boulder County.
- Open burning permits are not issued during the high pollution season (November 1 - February 28), except for areas above 6,400 feet.



- Open burning is prohibited during air pollution alert, an advisory prohibiting wood burning, or during burn bans.
- If there is a practical, alternative method of disposing (i.e. chipping, composting, disposal at a licensed landfill) of the material requested to be burned, an open burning permit may be denied.

### **TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT**

An open burning permit must be obtained from BCPH for ALL slash burns, **including wildfire mitigation burns**. If you live, outside of city limits in un-incorporated Boulder County, and you wish to burn slash, you can request a permit application from BCPH at 3450 Broadway in Boulder, CO 80304 or at <http://www.bouldercountyair.org/>. There is no charge for this permit. Permits issued by BCPH are for compliance with Colorado air quality regulations only.

### **EXCEPTIONS**

Some types of burns do not require a permit. They are:

- **Agricultural Burns:** Fires used to prepare soil for crop production or livestock grazing, or for the clearing of irrigation ditches and fence lines for commercial agriculture operations with income received greater than \$500.00 per year.
- **Recreational or Religious Burns:** Fires used for the non-commercial cooking of food (ie. BBQs), for religious purposes (bonfires, sweat lodges), and for recreational purposes (small campfires).
- **Training Burns:** Fires utilized by Fire Management agencies for training exercises.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

- Avoid burning during high winds or extremely dry conditions.
- Create a fire line down to mineral or bare soil around the pile or burn area to prevent the fire from spreading.
- Always have water, a rake, and a shovel nearby.
- Attend all fires until they are completely out. All fires must be completely out, with no residual smoke, by 4:00 p.m. Do not leave piles smoldering or burning overnight.
- Do not leave the burning pile unattended.
- Restrict piles to be burned to no larger than 6 feet wide and 4-6 feet high.
- Restrict mountain burning to damp conditions or when snow cover exists.

**Applicants must call their local fire department AND Boulder County Communications Dispatch (303-441-4444) before and after each permitted burn.**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Boulder County Public Health	303-441-1564
Air Quality Bulletin ( <i>daily burn hours</i> )	303-782-0211
Air Pollution Forecast ( <i>for Action Alert days</i> )	303-758-4848
Boulder County Communications	303-441-4444
Boulder County Wildfire Mitigation	303-441-3930
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment	303-692-3150

### ***On the Web***

Boulder County Public Health, Air Quality Program: <http://www.bouldercountyair.org/>

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment:  
<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/fireinfo.html>

