

WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 5

BURN PERMIT POLICY

Whatcom County Fire Protection District No. 5 “District” issues burn permits pursuant to its authority under RCW 52.12.101 and Resolution 2006-05. This policy is established in a manner consistent with the Washington Clean Air Act, chapter 70.94 RCW, as administered by the Department of Ecology, Section 502 of the regulations published by the Northwest Clean Air Agency and in accordance with other air pollution control authorities under WAC 173-425.

The Policy establishes the type of burns that may be conducted with or without permits, the weather conditions during which burns may be conducted, the requirements for controlling the burns, the provisions for suspending or canceling permits, the permit fee schedule and all other matters deemed necessary by the Chief.

All outdoor burning in the District requires a permit. The District will issue permits for the following three types of outdoor fires within the boundaries of the District as defined in WAC 173-425-030.

1. Recreational
2. Residential
3. Land Clearing

Burning permits may be issued upon request when the issuing officer deems it appropriate. The permit shall designate the premises and the exact location where the fire may be started and permitted, the nature of the material to be burned, the time limit of the permit, and may contain any special requirements and conditions pertaining to the fire and the control of the fire as the issuing officer deems appropriate. RCW 52.12.103

All or some outdoor burning will be suspended when a burn ban is issued by the Fire Marshal’s Office or an air quality alert is issued by the Northwest Clean Air Agency.

The permittee shall comply with the terms and conditions of the permit, and shall maintain a responsible person in charge of the fire at all times who shall maintain the fire under control, not permit it to spread to other property or structures, and extinguish the fire when the authorized burning is completed or when directed by district personnel. The possession of a permit shall not relieve the permittee from liability for damages resulting from the fire for which the permittee may otherwise be liable. RCW 52.12.104

The Fire District may levy a charge to recover the costs of providing fire suppression services. RCW 52.12.108.

1. **Recreational Fires** are defined as small campfire type fires. Campfire pits shall not exceed 4 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height. They may be constructed of any non-flammable material such as brick, stone or cement block. Commercially available fire enclosures are approved. The location of the fire must be 3 times the fire pit width from any flammable materials. i.e. structures, fences, natural vegetation etc. Fires must be clear of overhanging materials. Only firewood or charcoal may be burned.

There shall be water and a hand tool available for extinguishing the fire. Fire must be attended at all times.

2. **Residential Fires** are for the burning of leaves, clippings, pruning, and other yard and gardening refuse originating on the maintained area of residential property. The fire shall not exceed 4 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height. The location of the fire must be 3 times the fire pit width from any flammable materials. i.e. fences, natural vegetation etc., and a minimum of 50 feet from structures. Fires must be clear of overhanging materials. No garbage, dead animals, asphalt, petroleum products, paints, rubber products, plastics, paper (other than what is necessary to start a fire), cardboard, treated wood, construction/demolition debris, metal, or any substance (other than natural vegetation) that normally releases toxic emissions, dense smoke, or obnoxious odors when burned. Fires shall be extinguished by sundown. The fire must not include materials hauled from another property. There shall be water and a hand tool available for extinguishing the fire. Fire must be attended at all times.

3. **Land Clearing Fires** are for the burning of trees, stumps, shrubbery or other natural vegetation from land clearing projects. No land clearing fire shall be larger than twenty-five (25) feet in diameter and be located less than fifty (50) feet from any structure, standing timber or power lines. Excavator or equivalent (depending on size of pile) type of equipment with an operator, a fan of 6000 cfm, a source of water (minimum 300 gal*) and hose that will reach around the fire must be available at the site. Fire must be attended at all times. Site inspections are required. The issuing officer may use his/her discretion when determining if the burning can be done safely with consideration being given to the experience level of the permit applicant. More stringent requirements may be requested before a permit will be issued.

*For fires 15' x 15' or less, a garden hose will fulfill the water requirement.

Permits and Fees:

Permits for Recreational, Residential and Land Clearing Fires are available at the Benson Road Fire station.

- Recreational permits are valid for 12 months at a cost of US \$20.00.
- Land Clearing permits are valid for 24 hours at a cost of US \$50.00. 3 Permits may be issued for a maximum of 72 hours.
- Residential Permits are valid for seven (7) days at a cost of US \$5.00. More than one permit may be purchased at a time but must be dated at the time of sale by the District member providing the permit. Permits will not be given out without dates recorded.

Land/Homeowner may be charged Cost Recovery Fees for illegal burns:

1. Actual personnel costs.
2. Apparatus cost based on current State Mobilization rate schedule.