

MINNESOTA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



State Fire Marshal Division

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RECREATIONAL FIRES INFORMATION SHEET

This fire safety information sheet is based on the 2007 Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC). The requirements outlined in this information sheet apply only to recreational fires that are no larger than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height used for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth, or similar purposes. Any fire larger than these dimensions is considered "open burning" and regulated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). For further information on the requirements for open burning or for permits please contact the DNR at 651-296-6157 or info@dnr.state.mn.us.

SECTION 1 – RECREATIONAL FIRES

1.1 Minimum requirements for recreational fires

The 2007 MSFC establishes the minimum requirements for recreational fires that are applicable throughout the state of Minnesota. The following information is applicable even if a local jurisdiction does not have an ordinance regulating recreational fires.

- (1) Recreational fires must be at least 25 feet from all buildings or combustible materials. Combustible materials are things such as wood, paper, and plastics [MSFC (07) Section 307.4.2].
- (2) Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition [MSFC (07) Section 307.4.2].
- (3) Recreational fires must be constantly attended until the fire burns out completely or is extinguished [MSFC (07) Section 307.5].
- (4) A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with MSFC (07) Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, or garden hose shall be readily available at all times until the fire is extinguished. Examples of other approved fire extinguishing equipment would be a charged garden hose, dirt, or sand (and a means of applying it) [MSFC (07) Section 307.5].
- (5) The only materials permitted in a recreational fire are wood from trees, small branches, brush, or charcoal. Treated lumber materials, construction debris, garbage, plastic materials, or waste materials are not allowed to be burned in recreational fires [MN Statute 88.171].
- (6) Recreational fires must be immediately extinguished if they pose a fire safety risk, if they are not in compliance with the above, or when directed to do so by a police officer, firefighter, fire warden, or DNR officer [MSFC (07) Section 307.3].

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The MSFC (07) does not contain any regulations for immediate extinguishment if the smoke from a recreational fire is a nuisance to an adjoining property. However, many cities have language within their ordinance that requires the fire to be extinguished if someone complains about the smoke. Furthermore, some local ordinances have limitations on recreational fires when wind speeds exceed a specified amount (15 mph, 20 mph, etc.). For more information please consult with your local city or fire official.

1.2 Local ordinances

Many cities choose to adopt ordinances that are more stringent than the information listed in section 1.1. For this reason, it is important to check with your city before you have a recreational fire since they may have an ordinance that goes above and beyond the requirements of the MSFC. Compliance with the above information may not mean you are in compliance with all local regulations.

If you have additional questions not answered in this document please contact the State Fire Marshal Division at (651) 201-7200. Questions can also be e-mailed to firecode@state.mn.us or view our web page at www.fire.state.mn.us for the latest information on fire in Minnesota.