

## COSTILLA COUNTY, COLORADO

### OPEN BURNING REGULATIONS, PROCEDURE AND PERMITTING

An open burning permit must be obtained by any individual, company or other entity prior to conducting open burning activity.

The following requirements and conditions must be met in order for open burning to occur on private land in Costilla County, Colorado.

NON-EXEMPT BURNS: Permits issued by or on behalf of the Costilla County Sheriff's Office are required for non-exempt burns.

The following conditions must be met before an open burn permit is authorized to burn slash piles.

#### **SLASH (BRUSH) PILES CONSTRUCTION**

- Woody materials to be burned include only clean, dry slash (limbs, branches, needles, leaves) less than 6 inches in diameter. Tree stumps, trunks or logs (greater than 6 inches) shall not be included in the slash pile and are not permitted to be burned.
- No household trash, construction debris (building materials), lumber, tires, fence post, creosote products or wood products containing hazardous chemicals, etc. shall be burned.
- Piles shall be constructed so that the maximum size of the pile does not exceed sixteen (16) feet in diameter and twenty (20) feet in height and the minimum size of the pile shall be no smaller than six (6) feet in height and eight (8) feet in diameter. Piles shall be constructed so that no pile is closer than one hundred (100) feet to any adjacent standing tree trunk and tree crowns do not hang over the piles. Piles shall be located no closer to each other than twenty-five (25) feet. Piles should be constructed in openings or clearings whenever possible.
- Do not place piles over or near tree stumps or adjacent to any large down dead or green logs, as they will burn for an extended period of time and will require additional control.

- Piles shall be constructed no closer than one hundred (100) feet from any structure.
- Do not place piles near or under power lines or utility poles, drainages or waterways.
- These pile construction requirements shall be closely adhered to; fire department personnel will inspect for pile construction standards prior to authorizing your burn permit.

## **WHEN YOU BURN**

- Pile burning will occur **ONLY** when there's a minimum of eight (8) INCHES of snow cover.
- Burning slash during a snow event is encouraged from a smoke management standpoint. It's good etiquette to not smoke-out your neighbor when burning piles; notify those neighbors around you that you are burning. From a public safety standpoint monitor your smoke when burning near roads.
- Should temperatures and/or wind conditions develop that cause rapid melting of the snow cover, pile extinguishment shall commence. Do not light more piles than one person can manage safely at any one time. No more than two to three piles per person at one time are recommended.
- Pile burning may only occur after sunrise. Piles must be fully extinguished before sunset (no visible smoke). No burning will take place between sunset and sunrise.
- Wind speeds at the time of ignition must be a minimum of eight to twelve (8-12) mph and must not exceed thirty (30) mph. If wind gusts exceed 35 mph for a period of 30 minutes or more, piles will be extinguished and mopped up (no visible smoke). Piles should be visually checked the following day of the burn; all visible smoke/associated heat should be fully extinguished.
- No burning is allowed on holidays or holiday weekends, unless pre-authorized by the approving authority.

- Burns must be attended at all times; permittees shall have at least one hand tool (shovel) readily available on the burn site. There must be a working telephone (fixed or cellular) readily available in case of emergency. Signed (authorized) permits will be in possession of the landowner on site when burning.
- Permittees will notify the Costilla County Sheriff's Office Communications Center (Dispatch) 719-672-3302, when the burn begins and when the burn ends each day. The Communications Center will notify the respective Fire Protection District via phone or page that the permitted burn is scheduled for that day.
- When permittee is burning within the timberline the permittee will, (in addition to contacting the Costilla County Sheriff Dispatch), notify the Fire Chief at the Fire Department identified for your area 24 hours prior to and upon completion of the burn.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

- Contact your respective Costilla County Fire Department or the Costilla County Sheriff's Office for a burn permit application and instructions.
- NOTE: If your proposed slash pile burn falls within the timberline on the Sangre De Cristo Mountain Range adjacent to boundaries to LAS ANIMAS COUNTY, you must contact the Las Animas County Sheriff's Department for their permitting process requirements and/or regulations
- Fire Department personnel will schedule and conduct an inspection of your burn site. If conditions of this procedural document are met, the authorized fire department person will sign and issue the permit. Permits are valid for one year from the date of signature/authorization.

Any governmental agency responsible for fire management or resource management (USFS, Colorado State Forest Service, etc.) may notify the agency of jurisdiction for an exemption to this permitting process.

**EXEMPT BURNS: No authorization or permit is required for exempt burns.**

- Agricultural open burning (weeds/ditches), (recreational) camp fires, outdoor fireplaces, wood stoves, outdoor wood-fired boilers and training fires are examples of exempt burns.
- Camp Fires: Camp fires can be defined as “recreational fires” in which fires are used for non-commercial cooking of food for human consumption (barbeques), for instructional or religious purposes (bon fires) or for recreational purposes (campfires on private land). This applies only to the burning of clean, dry wood (no treated wood, trash, etc.).
- Campfires must be within an enclosure, constructed of steel or other non-combustible material. Enclosure shall be no larger than three feet (3) (inside) diameter. There must be an area of at least three feet (3) of clearance of combustible materials surrounding the fire enclosure.
- Campfires must be attended at all times. Campfires will be fully extinguished upon departure from the site.
- Camp fires will not be permitted within 25 feet of any structure
- Campfires are permitted year round, but NOT allowed during periods of high fire danger, i.e. during fire bans or when fire restrictions are in place in Costilla County. Contact the Costilla County Sherriff’s Office Communications Center (Dispatch) (719) 672-3302, for fire restrictions and/or fire ban information.
- Training Fires are fires utilized by fire or resource management agencies for training purposes.
- Agricultural Burns: are defined as the open burning of ground cover vegetation for the purpose of preparing the soil for crop production and livestock grazing, for the clearing of irrigation ditches and fence lines and for controlling noxious weeds for “commercial agricultural operations”. Commercial Agricultural Operations are those operations in which the growing of crops or livestock is a “gainful occupation” such that the income received from the agricultural operation is greater than \$500.00 per year. Properties that are “agriculturally zoned” but do not have commercial income greater than \$500.00 per year will not be considered “agricultural” and are not exempt from this permitting process.

