

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BACKYARD TRASH BURNING



A Guide for New Hampshire Homeowners

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Services

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NEW HAMPSHIRE LAW NOW PROHIBITS BACKYARD TRASH BURNING!

On July 16, 2001 a statute (RSA-125N) was signed in to law that prohibits the “residential open burning of combustible domestic waste”. This ban on “backyard trash burning” is **effective January 1, 2003.**



WHAT IS “COMBUSTIBLE DOMESTIC WASTE”?

RSA-125N defines “combustible domestic waste” as, “combustible waste such as, but not limited to, **household trash, packaging materials, plastics, coated or laminated papers, rubber, painted or treated wood, coated or treated cardboard, oily rags, and animal, vegetable, and kitchen waste.**”

WHAT MATERIALS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE BAN?

The ban **does not include** the outdoor burning of **clean wood, leaves or brush** generated by New Hampshire residents, nor does it include the burning of clean paper to start campfires, etc. However, these materials can only be burned in accordance with the requirements of the Woodland Fire Control Act (RSA 227-L)

after obtaining a permit from your local fire warden.

WHY HAS NEW HAMPSHIRE BANNED BACKYARD TRASH BURNING?

- Many highly toxic chemicals, including **dioxin**, are released into the air when trash is burned outdoors. Today's trash contains inks, dyes, chlorine, plastics, toxic metals and a variety of synthetic materials that can produce these toxins when burned, especially at the low temperatures and lack of oxygen present in backyard burn barrels.
- Smoke from burn barrels stays close to the ground. As a result, the toxic emissions stay “close to home”, affecting your own family and neighbors--especially children--the most.
- Backyard trash burning generates smoke and odors that often create a nuisance.
- Backyard trash burning can be a fire hazard.

ARE THERE ANY PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING THE BAN?

YES! The NH Dept. of Environmental Services (DES) has the authority to enforce the ban. Penalties can range from a simple warning with an explanation of the ban, to fines ranging from up to **\$100** for the first offense to **\$250** for subsequent offenses.

HOW SHOULD I DISPOSE OF MY HOUSEHOLD TRASH?

All NH towns are required to provide approved methods of trash disposal for their residents, making backyard trash burning an unnecessary practice. In addition, you can reduce the amount of trash that must be disposed of by:

- Recycling paper, glass, plastics, aluminum, used motor oil, and other materials at your town transfer station or recycling center.
- Starting and using a compost pile for organic material including leaves, grass clippings and vegetable scraps. Compost provides excellent nutrients for gardens.
- Purchasing food and other items with less packaging or in bulk to avoid unnecessary waste.



If you have any questions about backyard trash burning or your waste disposal options, contact the DES Public Information Office at **271-2975**.