

Do I need a fire permit?

A fire pit with a screen does not require a fire permit.

Fires that do not require a permit

- **Recreational fires**

A recreational fire or pit fire is a fire that is totally confined within a non-combustible structure or container that has draft and smoke vents covered with a heavy gauge metal screen and mesh size no larger than 13 mm. The pit must be ventilated in a way that does not allow for the escape of combustible materials, including ash. A fire pit must be situated a minimum of three metres (10 feet) away from other combustible product (e.g. fence, house, garage, deck or trees).

This fire is for recreational purposes only (cooking or obtaining warmth) and may only be fueled with clean dry wood. At no time should a recreational fire pit be used to burn garbage, leaves, straw or any other prohibited burning materials. Recreational fires which meet these parameters are allowed in all hamlets and rural areas without a fire permit. Use of a fire pit is not allowed during a fire ban.

When you are burning

As burning can produce smoke, please be considerate of your neighbours and surrounding residents.

Frequently asked burning questions

- **1. Do I need a fire permit?**

Fires that **require** a fire permit include open fires and burn barrel fires.

Fires that **do not require** a fire permit include recreational fire pits (pots, bowls, fire pots or chimineas). All fires are subject to a fire ban.

- **2. What is a recreational fire pit?**

A recreational fire pit is totally confined within a non-combustible structure or container that has the draft and smoke vents covered with a heavy gauge metal screen. The screen must have a mesh size no larger than 13 mm (1/2 inch) that precludes the escape of any combustible materials, including ash. They do not require a fire permit, but are subject to a fire ban.

Fire pits can include fire pots, bowls, tables or chimineas, and must be situated a minimum of three metres (10 feet) away from any other combustible product (e.g. fence, house, garage, deck or trees).

A recreational fire may only be fuelled with dry wood, charcoal, coal, natural gas or propane. At no time should a recreational fire pit be used to burn garbage, leaves, straw or any other prohibited burning materials.

- **3. Is there anything I'm not allowed to burn?**

As per Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (RSA 2000) it is illegal to burn:

- food waste
- animal carcasses and manure
- treated construction materials
- wire
- insulation
- rubber and plastics
- herbicides and pesticides
- any other toxic materials which may produce dense black smoke
- painted, stained or pressure treated wood
- railroad tiles

- **4. What do I do if I believe someone is burning improperly?**

The health and safety of our residents is very important. That includes incidents of excessive or toxic smoke, burning prohibited materials, burning improperly or burning during a fire advisory or ban.

Residents with complaints of this nature are encouraged to call 9-1-1. If it is determined that a resident is burning improperly, penalties may be imposed at the Fire Department's discretion.

- **5. Can I burn my household garbage?**

Burning household garbage is not allowed. Refer to question "Is there anything I'm not allowed to burn?" for prohibited burning materials. Smoke and odours from burning plastics, food scraps and other garbage are unpleasant for neighbours. It is also harmful to the environment and is a safety hazard.

- **6. What are the penalties for burning illegally?**

Any person who ignites, fuels, supervises, maintains or permits an outdoor fire within the municipal boundaries of the Municipal District of Foothills without a permit or in violation of burning regulations (e.g. during a fire ban) can be fined up to \$1,500.

Should the fire get out of control and emergency fire response is required, the person responsible for the fire can be charged the full firefighting costs.

If your fire causes damage to others' property, you may also be responsible for the costs to repair the damage, whether you have a valid permit or not.

- **7. How do you decide when a fire ban is declared?**

Every day during fire season (roughly March through October), the Foothills Fire Department compiles and reviews current and forecasted data supplied by active fire weather stations in the area. Factors which are reviewed include:

- humidity
- wind speed
- temperature
- precipitation

These factors, along with other data such as the status of ground level fire fuels, are used to create a hazard assessment tool called the Fire Weather Index System.

This system, together with operational factors such as water restrictions and/or the availability of appropriate staffing and equipment due to other events happening in the Municipal District of Foothills, determine the hazard level. The hazard level is a primary factor when deciding if a current fire ban should remain, or in times of no fire ban, if one should be declared.

- **8. Do I need permit for a chiminea or fire pot?**

Chimineas and portable fire pots (pits or bowls) fall under then definition of "fire pits" and therefore do not require a fire permit. There must be at least three metres (10 feet) clearance from any combustible materials and the front opening and the stack must be covered with a metal screen with a mesh size no larger than 13 mm.

When positioning your chiminea, find a level, immovable, non-combustible surface to set it on. Do not put your chiminea in a gazebo, on a wooden surface or in an enclosed porch. Insulate the bowl with sand or pea gravel to approximately 10 cm below the lower lip of the mouth so that the fire is not in direct contact with the clay.

Store your chiminea inside a shed or garage during the winter. The combination of freezing temperatures and moisture could cause it to crack. Place it on a pallet or pieces of wood so that air can circulate underneath.