



Brush burning, bonfires and burn barrels

Outdoor burning in your township

You don't have to look far to find someone burning brush, enjoying a bonfire or even burning trash. Outdoor burning is common in townships throughout Michigan. Unfortunately, its impact on the health and safety of those living nearby is often overlooked.

Township officials have a tough job when it comes to managing outdoor burning in their communities. Although outdoor burning can present risks to property and health, limiting what residents can do on their personal property is not easy or popular. In this article, we'll examine the state regulations regarding outdoor burning, discuss upcoming changes to those regulations, and share why township officials should be concerned. We'll also explore some viable options for taking the heat out of contentious outdoor burning issues.

DNRE OPEN BURNING REGULATIONS

Many townships, cities and villages throughout Michigan have their own ordinances that address outdoor burning. However, municipal officials may not know that outdoor burning is also regulated at the state level under air, waste and forest fire regulations (Parts 55, 115 and 515 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act). These regulations identify when a burn permit is required, as well as what type of waste can be burned. A summary of these regulations is provided below. It's important to note that townships can have ordinances that are more restrictive than these regulations, but cannot have ordinances that are less restrictive.

Burn permits. The forest fire regulations require that a burn permit be obtained prior to conducting any burning outside of a burn barrel when the ground is not snow covered. In northern Michigan, burn permits are issued by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). In

