

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Be responsible with outdoor fires

WEST HARTFORD, CT (April 8, 2020) – The West Hartford Fire Marshal is asking residents to follow current outdoor burning regulations and exercise good judgement while burning yard wastes or having a back yard recreational fire.

The Town of West Hartford has received a number of complaints that smoke from backyard fires are impacting neighboring properties.

Recreational outdoor fires and burning of yard wastes, under current West Hartford and State open burning regulations, are prohibited if the burning is conducted so that it creates a nuisance for neighbors. Other restrictions apply. Only non-processed, untreated, natural wood can be burned in a recreational fire. If the wood has been milled, planed, glued, painted or treated, it cannot be used as fuel for the fire pit or chiminea. Pallets, construction debris, and trash are also prohibited for being burned.

Burning of shrubs, vegetation, or prunings, the diameter of which cannot exceed 3 inches at the widest point, is only allowed by State regulations when a permit has been obtained from the Fire Marshal who is the Town's Open Burning Official. As with recreational fires, permitted fires are prohibited where they create a nuisance to neighboring properties. When making application for the open burning permit, the Fire Marshal will inspect the site of the proposed burn and may place additional restrictions on the permit.

Neither type of fire is permitted when the State's Fire Index is HIGH. When a fire is found to create a nuisance or otherwise being used in an unsafe manner, the Burning Official or Fire Officer has the authority to order the fire extinguished and consider issuing a fine under the state or local regulation. It is also important to note that, even when a fire is allowed or a valid permit is in hand, the person responsible for the fire is liable for any damages caused by that fire.

The West Hartford Fire Department recognizes that a safe and well-managed recreational fire can be a welcome relief for the family during these trying times and asks that all of our residents be a good neighbor and follow these important safeguards:

- DO NOT BURN WHEN THE FIRE INDEX IS HIGH!
- Burn only non-processed, seasoned wood to minimize smoke.
- NEVER use gasoline or other flammable liquid to start or accelerate a fire.
- Be a good neighbor. If the atmospheric conditions are such that the smoke from your fire stays low, especially if it is heading towards a neighbor's house, do not continue with your fire. Postpone it for another time when conditions are better. Remember that if a neighbor makes a complaint, the responding fire official will order the fire extinguished and a fine could be issued.
- Current safety recommendations are that fires be kept from between 10 to 20 feet from any building, fence or other combustible items.
- Keep a garden hose, bucket of water or other extinguishing means close to the fire.
- Be vigilant. Keep children at least 3 feet from the fire and do not permit horseplay in close proximity of the fire.

If you have a question regarding open burning or recreational fires, please contact Fire Marshal Michael Sinsigalli at 860-561-8320 or email at msinsigalli@westhartfordct.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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