

# Guide to Burning

in Mesa County



Read through this guide to apply for your Open Burn Permit!

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### SPECIAL NOTICE

If you purchased a Residential Burn Permit last year (2020) there is no charge for your permit this year.

Please make sure to indicate your previous purchase on your application.



**MESA COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH**  
*Working Together for a Healthy Community*

# Why is burning regulated?

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1

To protect the health of our residents

2

To reduce pollution in Mesa County

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## What permits are offered?

### 1 Agricultural Burn Permit

- No fee.
- Valid for a calendar year.
- Registering for this permit gives your local fire department a heads up that you'll be burning and is combined with fire safety regulations.

### 2 Residential Burn Permit

- Residential permits cost \$25, and the money supports your local fire district.
- This permit is valid for both Spring and Fall Open Burn Seasons in a calendar year.
- Properties must be at least one acre in size to open burn. Properties smaller than one acre may burn to maintain irrigation ditch/lateral only.
- Daily limits for open burning are 10 acres per day for non-pile burning and less than 250 cubic feet per day for pile burning.
- Piles should be at least 300 feet apart, otherwise, they are considered one pile for burning.
- Piles should be 50 feet from any structures (including combustible fences).
- The permit outlines expectations and possible violation investigation and enforcement to protect the health and safety of Mesa County residents.

### 3 City of Grand Junction

- City residents can apply for a burn permit through Mesa County Public Health.
- The burn season within City limits is one month shorter for spring and fall.

Spring Open Burn Season: March 1 - April 30  
Fall Open Burn Season: Sept. 1 - Sept. 30

# When can I burn?

1. Agricultural Burn Permits allow burning year-round in Mesa County and during designated burn seasons within the City of Grand Junction

Mesa County  
Year-round when  
conditions are appropriate

City of Grand Junction  
March 1 - April 30  
Sept. 1 - Sept. 30

2. Residential Burn Permits allow burning only during the designated burn seasons.

Spring Season  
Fall Season

Mesa County  
March 1 - May 31  
Sept. 1 - Oct. 31

City of Grand Junction  
March 1 - April 30  
Sept. 1 - Sept. 30

3. Burns must take place one hour after sunrise and must be completely extinguished one hour before sunset.

4. All burns are prohibited during a No Burn Advisory or other open burn ban. It is your responsibility to check current air quality and fire safety conditions. Check current air quality conditions at [health.mesacounty.us](http://health.mesacounty.us).

Residents above 6,000 feet elevation are exempt from the seasonal restrictions but should notify the local fire department prior to burning.

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## What can I burn?

- ✓ Agricultural Burns - materials related to the agricultural process
  - Cover vegetation to prepare the land for crop production
  - Orchard trimmings
  - Weeds
  - Maintenance of irrigation ditches
- ✓ Residential Burns
  - Dry weeds
  - Dry garden waste
  - Clean, dry tree, shrub or brush trimmings less than one inch in diameter

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## What can't I burn?

- ✗ Aerosol cans
- ✗ Hazardous or toxic materials
- ✗ Motor oil
- ✗ Trash
- ✗ Chemicals
- ✗ Insulation
- ✗ Plastic
- ✗ Treated wood or pallets
- ✗ Commercial landscaping waste
- ✗ Leaf and grass clippings\*
- ✗ Tires
- ✗ Tree stumps
- ✗ Construction debris/lumber

\*In the City of Grand Junction, a small pile of leaves, no more than 3 cubic feet, is allowed. Agricultural annual vegetative growth is exempted.

Burning in a barrel is PROHIBITED at all times

# Why are Open Burn Bans Issued?

To ensure burning happens on appropriate days.

## ⊘ Weather

- Red Flag Warnings
- Fire Weather Watch
- High wind or dry conditions

## ⊘ Air Quality

- Air Watch Alerts
- Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment Air Quality Action Days

## ⊘ Public Safety

- Mesa County Sheriff's Office Burn Bans

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## How do I get a permit?

1

The easiest way to get a burn permit is to apply online at [health.mesacounty.us](http://health.mesacounty.us)

Residents who need assistance using the online system or don't have access to a computer or an internet connection can still apply for an Open Burn Permit in person at Mesa County Public Health, 510 29 ½ Road in Grand Junction, or call 970-248-6900.

2

Carefully read the conditions of the permit and agree to follow the rules for Open Burning.

3

Print a copy of your permit and ensure it's available on site at the time of the burn.

4

Follow the instructions on the permit when you burn, including notifying your local fire department when you plan to burn.

# Alternatives to Burning

## Composting

All composting requires 3 basic ingredients.



### Tree Waste

- Dead leaves
- Branches
- Twigs
- ▶ Provides carbon



### Yard/Household Waste

- Grass clippings
- Vegetable waste
- Fruit scraps
- Coffee grounds
- ▶ Provides nitrogen



### Water

- ▶ Provides moisture to help break down organic matter.
- ▶ Adequate water is key to the process.

Your compost pile should have an equal amount of tree waste to yard/household waste and be about half water.

Alternate layers of organic materials of different-sized particles.

### Tip

Bring your composting materials to the Mesa County Organic Material Composting Facility which utilizes specialized heavy equipment and a granular Nitrogen source called Urea to speed up the natural process and produce uniform, high quality products.

## Tilling

You can use a tiller or cultivator to mix and blend the waste into your garden or lawn.

### Be sure to:

- Remove rocks and large debris from the area.
- Check the ground for moisture, it shouldn't be muddy or too dry.
- Use an electrically powered machine to reduce emissions, if possible.

## Other Options



Planting cover crops or rotating crops can help reduce weeds.



### Restorative Land Management

- Putting animals on property only for crops.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) might be able to connect you to livestock.