

# Guide to Burning

in Mesa County



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

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## Why is burning regulated?

- 1** To protect the health of our residents
- 2** To reduce pollution in Mesa County

## 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

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## 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      Mesa County  
Fall Season        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.

## When can't I burn?

To ensure burning happens on appropriate days a no burn advisory may be in place. Open Burning is not allowed on these days and may be due to the following reasons:

- ⊘ Fire Safety**
  - 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

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

\*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

## 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.

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## 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.

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