



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey  
LEADING BOLDLY, WORKING TOGETHER*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Open Burning Guidelines**

ROCKFORD – As fall approaches and cooler temperatures prevail, the Rockford Fire Department generally sees an increased number of calls for open burning complaints. In response to this increased number of incidents and various inquiries regarding open burning, the following is an overview of City of Rockford open burning codes, ordinances, and guidelines.

It is important to note that burning of trash, rubbish, yard waste, or construction materials is never allowed within the city limits. In our current fire code, there is an allowance for the use of recreational fires for cooking purposes. The definition of a recreational fire by the City-adopted *ICC International Fire Code, 2009 Edition*, Section 302.1 is:

An outdoor fire, burning materials other than rubbish, with a total fire area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for cooking food for human consumption.

There is no reference to campfires; therefore, campfires are not allowed inside the city limits of Rockford.

If the Fire Department is dispatched on an open burning complaint and the Company Officer has any concerns as to the legality of the fire or safety concerns, the fire will be extinguished and a report forwarded to the Division of Fire Prevention. A Notice to Appear may be issued after the report has been reviewed by the Division of Fire Prevention.

**The Rockford Fire Department Fire Prevention Division provides the following guidelines to citizens on recreational fires:**

1. Ensure that the definition of a recreational fire is met (fire is only for cooking food).
2. Limit the size of the recreational fire to no larger than approximately 2' x 2' x 2' using seasoned, dry firewood only.
3. Burn at a reasonable hour (no later than 10:30 – 11:00 PM) and for a reasonable length of time (less than 3 hours).
4. Check with all neighbors (courtesy and health or environmental issues).
5. Have a hose or fire extinguisher present to extinguish the fire.
6. Consider weather conditions (wind, dry conditions, etc.)
7. If a complaint is received and any of the above conditions are violated, the fire will be extinguished and the report forwarded to Fire Prevention for legal action.

***Remember that a recreational fire is for cooking food only, and is not a campfire.***

Over forty citations have been written for Open Burning since January 1, 2013. Fines start at \$150.00 and can be as high as \$500.00, depending on the severity and/or possible repeated complaints at the same address.

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