

Each year, there are more than 1,000 wildfires in the state of Ohio. Wildfires in Ohio threaten and cause damage to homes, private property, trees and landscapes. More importantly, lives are placed at risk.

Most of these fires are preventable. Most of Ohio's wildfires are the result of arson and careless **open-burning** (burning of trash, debris and brush).

Ohio Law prohibits Open-Burning in the spring and fall.

Open-burning is particularly dangerous in the spring and fall, when the leaves are on the ground, the grass is not green and the weather is warm, dry and windy. **As a result, open burning in Ohio is prohibited in unincorporated areas in March, April, May, October, and November, 6 am to 6 pm.**

Prescribed fire can be used as a tool to eliminate undesirable vegetation and reduce hazardous fuel levels. When managed carefully, **prescribed fire** (an intentionally or naturally ignited fire that burns under specific conditions, in a predetermined area, to attain planned resource management objectives) can stimulate the growth of native vegetation and reduce fire hazards brought on by the accumulation of dead vegetation.

Only Certified Prescribed Fire Managers can conduct prescribed fires in Ohio during the spring and fall.

To conduct a prescribed fire when open-burning is prohibited, an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager must request a waiver from Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry.

Smoke waivers from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) are required for most prescribed fires and open burns.

Check with the Ohio EPA for more information on smoke laws in your area.

Questions?

To learn more about the Division of Forestry's prescribed fire regulations, visit:

ohiodnr.com/forestry

Or, contact:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
1-877-247-8733
forestry@dnr.state.oh.us

Remember! To burn between 6 am and 6 pm in the months of March, April, May, October or November, you must be an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager and you must have a waiver from the Division of Forestry.



Ohio's Fire Laws:

What you need to know about ODNR's fire laws before conducting prescribed fires & open burns in Ohio.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

What is the Difference between an Open Burn and a Prescribed Fire?

In Ohio, most outdoor burning in unincorporated (rural) areas is prohibited in the months of March, April, May, October and November between 6 am and 6 pm. This ban applies to both Open Burns and Prescribed Fires.

The term “Open Burns” refers to debris, brush and trash fires. Open burns are typically fires that are used to get rid of waste or debris. No open burns are allowed when the burn ban is in effect.

“Prescribed Fires” refers to fires that are intentionally lit, under predetermined conditions, to meet various resource management objectives, such as vegetation regeneration, forest fuels reduction, or wildlife management. Prescribed fires may be conducted during the burn ban, but only with the permission of the Chief of the Division of Forestry.

Outdoor burning in Ohio is regulated by:

- [Ohio Department of Natural Resources \(ODNR\), Division of Forestry.](#)
- [Ohio Environmental Protection Agency \(OEPA\).](#)

OEPA'S OUTDOOR BURNING LAWS:

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency regulates smoke emissions from outdoor burning. Contact your local OEPA District Office for more information on OEPA smoke regulations, or, online at: www.epa.state.oh.us

ODNR'S OUTDOOR BURNING LAWS:

[ODNR Division of Forestry law, ORC 1503.18, bans outdoor burning statewide in unincorporated areas in the spring and fall between 6 am and 6 pm.](#)

To help prevent wildfires, all open burning and prescribed fires are prohibited in Ohio in the months of March, April, May, October, and November, between 6 am and 6 pm.

Section C of this law allows the Chief of the Division of Forestry to waive the ban.

It is the Division of Forestry's policy to only waive this ban for individuals that have been certified by the Division as a Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. There is no charge for the waiver, but it must be requested in writing by the Certified Prescribed Fire Manager. Waivers will only be granted for prescribed fires that have a completed burn plan in place prior to the burn. No waivers will be granted for debris, trash or brush burning, or any other kind of open burning.

Interested in becoming an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager?

To be recognized as an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager, you must either be qualified under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group as a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss, Type II OR complete at least one of the two following courses:

- Ohio's Certified Prescribed Fire Manager Course
- The Nature Conservancy's "Workshop on Ecological Burning"

The Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager course is offered annually through ODNR and covers various topics, such as:

- Laws, Rules, and Procedures Affecting Prescribed Fire in Ohio
- Ohio Fire Ecology
- Prescribed Fire Planning Process
- Firing Methods
- Smoke Management Techniques
- Burn Management
- Contingency Planning
- Fire Behavior Predictions
- Burn Plan Development
- Field Exercises

For information on upcoming courses, contact the Division of Forestry:

1-877-247-8733, or: www.ohiodnr.com/forestry

Checklist for Conducting a Prescribed Fire during the Spring and Fall:

✓ Become an Ohio Certified Prescribed Fire Manager.

All prescribed fires that are conducted when open burning is prohibited must have a certified prescribed fire manager on site.

✓ Complete a burn plan.

Burn plans must meet standards set by ODNR Division of Forestry and must be on-site and followed the day of the burn.

✓ Submit a request for a burn waiver from ODNR Division of Forestry.

This waiver is required if you plan to conduct a prescribed burn in March, April, May, October or November between 6 am and 6 pm. No waivers are granted during this time for open burns (trash fires, brush fires, etc.).

✓ Know and comply with your local OEPA smoke management requirements.

OEPA has detailed regulations regarding the smoke emissions from prescribed fires and open burns. Contact your local OEPA District Office for information and instructions on how to comply with these regulations.

✓ Wait until the weather conditions are right.

Burn only on a day where the weather conditions match those described in the plan.

✓ Notify local authorities on burn day.

When weather conditions permit the prescribed fire, notify local police and fire departments that you will be burning.