



# ***Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department***

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## **Media Release**

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## **City implements new burn permit fee for commercial construction sites and public gathering bonfires**

*Backyard fire pits, fireplaces, campfires excluded*

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The City of Murfreesboro Building & Codes Department has established a new burn permit fee for open burning organic material on commercial construction sites and for organizations like schools, churches or neighborhood groups hoping to host public gathering bonfires. The new burn permit fee is \$100.

“The City had gotten a lot of complaints about flying ash and smoke from large outdoor burning,” said Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department (MFRD) Chief Mark Foulks. “Many residents couldn’t enjoy sitting in their backyards while the burning was taking place, and the smoke has affected people with breathing problems. That’s why we established an Open Burn Ordinance.”

An open burn ordinance was approved in February 2020. Part of the new ordinance included tasking City Buildings & Codes with developing a permit process and establishing a fee for developers who burn openly on construction sites and for groups planning bonfire events.

A Resolution establishing the new burn permit fee was approved by the Murfreesboro City Council at its Thursday, July 9, 2020 regular Council meeting.

The MFRD Fire Marshal’s Office inspectors will inspect the site prior to permit applications being approved.

“Our goal is to make sure the developers or groups are burning in a safe manner,” said MFRD Fire Marshall Carl Peas. “Burning large construction debris or conducting large public gathering bonfires can be dangerous if the fire is close to a structure or gets out of hand.”

A burn permit is not required for typical backyard or residential burning of permitted materials in a fire that is three feet or less in diameter and contained to a commercially manufactured fire pit, a constructed fire pit, or an outdoor fireplace.

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The application for Commercial Construction Site Burning is limited to:

- 1) Prior to permit issuance a site inspection will be performed by the Fire Marshal to determine fire pit location. After permit issuance and prior to burning contact the Fire Marshal for inspection of the fire pit construction. Fire Marshal's office at 615-849-2605 for an inspection of the site and burn permit.
- 2) Burning is limited to trees, stumps, brush, and other vegetation generated on site for site-clearing purposes.
- 3) All burning shall be conducted in a three-sided, minimum six-foot deep pit. The pit may be dug for depth, may consist of earthen berm walls, or a combination of dug and earthen walls that meet the minimum requirements.
- 4) The City reserves the right to impose additional safety requirements upon inspection and before issuing a permit, including, without limitation, requiring the applicant to use a pit that is greater than six feet in depth.
- 5) The pit must be a minimum of 50 feet away from any structure, and the fire must always be attended, completely extinguished or covered with soil when workers or attendants are not on site and must be completely extinguished or covered with soil at dusk.
- 6) A permit holder shall take those precautions, such as the use of commercial blowers or air curtains, reasonably necessary to prevent smoke and embers from any such fire so as to not negatively affect neighboring property owners or create a risk of fire spread.

The application for a Bonfire in conjunction with a public gathering includes:

- 1) Bonfires consist of the burning of heavy timber, large tree limbs, or other vegetation arranged in a pile.
- 2) The burning of non-permitted materials in a bonfire is prohibited.
- 3) Bonfire safety plan and site inspection is required prior to approval of permit.

For a Commercial Construction Site Burn Permit or Bonfire Permit Application click here:

<https://www.murfreesborotn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12498/burn-permit-app>.

To view the Open Burn Ordinance, click here:

[https://library.municode.com/tn/murfreesboro/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO\\_CH12FIPRFIRESE\\_ARTVOPBU](https://library.municode.com/tn/murfreesboro/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO_CH12FIPRFIRESE_ARTVOPBU)

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