



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BURN PERMITS

### Do I Live In An Area In Which The Reno Fire Department Can Issue A Burn Permit?

**Who can have a burn permit?** City of Reno residents who reside outside the “hydrographic basin” can be issued an open burning permit. If you live in Washoe County but outside the Reno city limits, please call 775-326-6000.

**What is the hydrographic basin?** The hydrographic basin is an air quality district as defined by the Nevada Division of Water Resources, in which particulate matter and carbon monoxide must be limited in order to protect the environment.

**Where is it?** The hydrographic basin is a big ring around the cities of Reno and Sparks. Generally speaking:

- It runs a bit to the south of Mt. Rose Highway
- East of Sparks
- West of Verdi
- It’s trickier to the north. Sun Valley (and most other north valleys) is outside the basin, but North Virginia (and surrounds) northwest of North McCarran and south of Golden Valley are inside.

**How about a picture?** *Please see map on main Fire page at Reno.gov.*

If you question whether your property is inside or outside the hydrographic basin, contact the Air Quality Management Division of the Washoe County District Health Department at 775-784-7200.

**Why is the hydrographic basin important?** It has to do with air quality and federal funds. When Washoe County exceeds federal air quality standards, the government withholds matching highway funds, and the loss in revenue is significant to our schools and roadways.

### Are there any exceptions?

1. Any local, state, or federal government agency can be issued a permit inside the hydrographic basin.
2. Operators of ditch and water delivery facilities can be issued a permit inside the hydrographic basin. Also, anybody who lives on a ditch and has water rights can be issued a “ditch only” permit. This means that the resident can burn the ditch so that the water runs through it.
3. Operators of commercial agricultural facilities can be issued a permit inside the hydrographic basin. The definition of a commercial agricultural facility is a business that makes more than 50% of its income from agriculture.
4. If it would be otherwise impossible or impractical due to the topography of the land or the configuration of a particular lot to remove a significant hazard, the air quality officer and the fire department can do a joint inspection and issue a special permit inside the hydrographic basin.



### I Qualify For A Permit. Now What Do I Do?

**Who do I contact?** Visit the Fire Department’s web page at [Reno.gov](http://Reno.gov) and fill out the Burn Permit Request form. The form can be emailed to [RFDRequests@reno.gov](mailto:RFDRequests@reno.gov) or faxed back to the department (Fax: 775-334-3826). If you have further questions, please call the Reno Fire Department’s Division of Fire Prevention at 775-334-2300.

### What happens next?

1. You will receive a confirmation phone call once we receive your permit request.
2. A fire crew will contact you to schedule a time for your fire safety inspection.
3. Your permit will be issued to you once the fire safety inspection report has been turned into Fire Prevention and processed. **Please Note:** You may **not** burn until you receive your permit.

**You no longer need to renew your permit annually.** It is valid (unless revoked) for the address issued, but is not transferrable to a tenant or new property owner. If you move to a new address and would like to burn there, a new permit must be issued and the process begun again.

## What will fire crews look for during the fire safety inspection?

- The fire code requires that **fires** 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height **be 25 feet from a structure**. So the crews will look to make sure that you have sufficient area in your yard to provide 25 feet from all structures.
- Fire crews will make sure you plan to **burn small piles**.
- They will look to see that you have provided a **cleared space around and above** the proposed burn piles. This fire fuel break should be **10 to 15 feet wide**.
- During the safety inspection, the crews will check to make sure that you have both **running water** and **hand tools** on site.
- The health code specifies that **only vegetation may be burned**.
- Fire crews will check to make sure that **no tree limbs, garbage, trash, or other combustibles** are part of your burn plan.



## When Can I Burn?

### When is open burning by permit allowed?

- Open burning season is dictated by air quality regulations, weather, and fuel moisture content.
- **Fire season opens, generally, in March and closes when fire season is declared.**
- **Citizens with burn permits are responsible for checking the Reno Fire Department website [www.reno.gov](http://www.reno.gov) which says whether burn season is open or closed.**
- Depending upon conditions, the Fire Marshal may open burning again towards the end of October.
- Federal air quality regulations prohibit burning November 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of February.

The Reno Fire Department issues public service announcements and updates their website to announce when burning is allowed. It is your responsibility to know whether burning is permitted and to comply with all burn regulations.

**What hours can I burn? Fires can be lit at 6 a.m. (if it's not windy) and must be out by 1400 hours. However, you may not burn if it is windy.** Do not light your fire on a windy day and, should conditions change during your burn, extinguish the fire immediately.



## What Must I Do To Burn Safely?

**Prior to lighting your fire, check the weather:**

[www.wrh.noaa.gov/rev.fire/index.php](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/rev.fire/index.php)

- Do **not** burn on **windy days**.
- Fires must be **constantly attended** by an **adult**.
- Burn **small piles** only.
- **30-60** minutes after extinguishment, the site must be **rechecked for smoldering materials** that could rekindle.
- Do not burn in a site other than the **site** the fire department **approved** during their inspection.
- **Maintain** the cleared area **around** and **above** your burn site. Remove all combustible materials for at least 10 - 15 feet.
- Burn **vegetation only**.
- Have **running water and hand tools** readily available on site.
- You are responsible for any damage which may result from negligent burning, so do not hesitate to call **9-1-1** should the fire get away from you.

