



TOWN OF TRURO

BOARD OF HEALTH

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GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR FIRE PITS – RESIDENTIAL USE

Adopted by a vote of the Truro Board of Health: February 21, 2012

Outdoor fire pits for recreational use have become popular over the past few years. However smoke emissions from these pits can cause potential or even actual health or nuisance problems for abutters and other neighbors. Accordingly, the Board of Health hereby adopts the following guidelines to mitigate any such risks:

The following precautions should be taken by the person responsible for the operation of a fire pit:

1. Fires should not be started when the weather creates conditions for blowing smoke or in the winter when temperature inversions limit the flow of air creating lingering smoke. Check the [MassDEP air quality forecast](#) (also available at the MassDEP Open Burning Hotline at 617-556-1021) to be sure that weather conditions are suitable for open burning.
2. Fire pits should be located a minimum of 25 feet from structures or combustibles, such as houses, garages, sheds, wood piles, and wooden fences or any other combustible material, at least 10 feet from any over hanging branches, stumps, and trees and a minimum of 50 feet from abutting properties.
3. Fire should be kept to a reasonable size so the fire, embers, sparks or dense smoke do not endanger anyone or cause a nuisance on abutting properties.
4. Do not burn painted or stained wood, garbage, leaves, yard waste, treated wood, rubbish, trash, any material made or coated with rubber, plastic, leather or petroleum based materials.
5. Do not burn lumber containing glue or resin.
6. Do not burn wet or unseasoned wood. Burn only dry CLEAN wood or fire logs*.
7. The use of flammable or combustible liquid accelerants is not permitted.

8. Someone must attend the fire until it's completely out. A connected garden hose or other means to extinguish the fire must be readily available. A shovel or rake for controlling the fire should be at the site.

The Fire Department is authorized to require that a recreational fire be immediately extinguished and discontinued if it is determined that the fire constitutes a hazardous condition, *health issue* or a nuisance if the smoke is offensive to nearby neighbors.

*** Fire Logs are a product made from recycled resources which burn significantly cleaner than wood, cutting particulate matter by 76 per cent, creosote by 66 per cent and ash residue by 86 per cent. They also cut carbon monoxide emissions by more than 7 times compared to real wood. They are sold as brand name Enviro-Log or Duraflame at Home Depot and most garden centers specifically for outdoor use. They are designed especially for metal or masonry outdoor fireplaces, fire pits, camp fires and metal chimineas.*

The use of grills, smokers, fire pits, hibachis, torches, oil lamps, and chimineas are not specifically regulated under Massachusetts Fire Code 527 CMR, Massachusetts General Law 148 or Air Pollution Regulations 310 CMR. Typically these devices burn clean fuel. 310 CMR does prohibit burning trash or refuse. Also The head of the fire department does have the authority to remedy any situation, in his or her opinion, is likely to cause a fire or creates a nuisance.

With that understanding, the use of these devices is taken on an individual basis. If a complaint or concern is issued the responding fire department personnel will determine the hazard or nuisance to the public and take the appropriate action.