

Well, it's definitely fall! It's fun to sit around a bonfire and spend time with friends and family, but be sure you do it safely and legally. Read on to learn what's required for a safe, and legal, bonfire.

Recreational bonfires, typical in the Fall, require a Recreational Fire Permit – which are issued as single-use permits for recreational fires only. It is illegal in Howard County to hold a recreational fire without a permit issued by the Howard County Department Fire and Rescue Services, Office of the Fire Marshal. Visit www.hcdfrs.org under the tab for Office of the Fire Marshal to complete an online Recreational Fire Permit request.

For your safety:

- The signed Recreation Fire Permit must be on site during the fire event.
- A safe area of at least 10 feet will be maintained around the fire.
- The fire must be constantly attended by an adult, and people shall not be permitted to play in the fire.
- Maintain at least 2 fire extinguishers must be at the location.
- The fire shall not be more than 5 ft. X 5 ft. X 5 ft. in dimension and shall not burn longer than 3 hours.
- Fuel for the fire shall consist only of seasoned dry firewood and shall be ignited with a small quantity of paper. Trash, rubbish and debris shall not be burned.
- Burning will be done with the consent of the appropriate property owner.
- The fire shall be located at the maximum distance from any structures (a minimum distance of 50 feet).
- The fire must be completely extinguished afterwards.
- If severe winds are prevalent (greater than 10 MPH), the fire may not be ignited.
- If a state or local public official or fire official declares a ban on open fires because of a drought, dry conditions, or other atmospheric conditions, the fire is not permitted.
- Before lighting the fire, call (410)313-2929 (Communications) and notify the on duty supervisor about the fire. When the fire is completely extinguished, again notify them of same.
- Request for fires other than recreational require a burn permit and should be directed to the Bureau of Environmental Health (410) 313-2640.