

Burning Regulation Clarification

This information paper is intended to provide citizens with some clarification in relation to the burning regulations for the City of Wisconsin Rapids. These gray areas will also be clarified in the next version of Chapter 18 of the City of Wisconsin Rapids Municipal Code.

1. **Yard waste:** Many citizens do not know exactly what yard waste refers to. Pine needles and wet leaves produce a lot of smoke. While this in and of itself is not a major issue, it does become a real health hazard when it does drift into adjoining homes. People with respiratory problems can experience real medical issues by breathing in this smoke. So pine needles and leaves should be considered prohibited material. Dry leaves also have a tendency to drift and can easily fall on a roof or another yard and cause a fire. This same theory holds true for paper and cardboard products, which are considered recyclable material and are also prohibited.
2. **Hours to burn:** In relation to fire pits, the hours are now unlimited. However, citizens need to remember to call 423-1150, select Option 1, and press the * key to ensure burning, even in fire pits, is authorized before starting any fire within city limits. These unlimited hours are strictly related to fire pits, which may also be called camp fires, a burning pit, etc. In regard to clearing a lot, this requires a permit from the fire department, and the time frame to accomplish this type of burning is limited. More detailed information on land clearing may be found on our website at www.wirapids.org, select the **Government** tab on the top of the page, select **Fire Department**, scroll down to **Related Pages**, and you should locate the **Burning Regulation** document. In this document refer to paragraph 13.
3. **Ceremonial fires:** These are also referred to as bon fires. A permit is required for this type of fire as well and it needs to be inspected by a fire department representative prior to lighting it off.
4. **Largest complaint:** The largest complaint our department receives is in relation to smoke drifting into a neighbor's home. Please be kind to your neighbors and if the smoke is drifting because of wind speed, put it out and try another day. If we are called to the scene due to a complaint, our officer will investigate and if the complaint is legitimate, a warning will be issued to the person starting the fire and they will be requested to extinguish it. If this individual is non-compliant, our personnel will extinguish the fire and a bill will then be forwarded to the individual. If we are summoned to the same address for another such complaint, the individual will then be cited and fined. The second most common complaint is related to burning prohibited material, which is clearly outlined in the city burning regulations.
5. **Other important highlights:** Any fire must be completely extinguished before going in for the evening; all fires must be attended at all times; these guidelines apply only to the City of Wisconsin Rapids and citizens from other areas should check with their local fire department for the specific guidelines in that area.
6. **What can be burned?** The bottom-line in this day and age, is clean fire wood or small branches used for kindling are acceptable. Fire pits, or camp fires, used for recreational purposes or for cooking is basically all the burning that is allowed, with the exception of land clearing and bon fires.