



City of Madison Fire Department

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OUTDOOR AND OPEN BURNING

The Madison General Ordinance (34.307) and the State Fire Code prohibit outdoor and open burning without a permit. Fire Codes do permit fires for cooking and approved outdoor fireplaces. The Fire Department **does not** permit the burning of yard waste, construction debris, brush, etc. If the Fire Department receives a complaint, they will respond and can, **at the discretion of the Fire Officer**, extinguish the fire for any violation of the following conditions, or, if the fire is creating a hazard or nuisance. The **Fire Officer alone** will determine if the fire is creating a hazard or nuisance. A citation may be issued for any violation of the following conditions.

Permission of the property owner is required before starting a fire.

Campfires are only permitted in approved campgrounds. Madison does **not** have any approved campgrounds.

Outdoor fireplaces are available through many local department stores. They must be used in accordance with all of the manufacturer's safety requirements and Madison General Ordinance 34.307(4):

Outdoor fireplaces and pits are bowls or pits designed for the holding or burning of wood and shall be allowed without a license, as long as the following conditions are met:

- (a) Fireplaces shall include a bowl with supports to ensure clearances to combustibles;
- (b) Pits shall have an enclosure, heavy screen or spark arrestor to control and contain embers and sparks;
- (c) Fireplaces or pits shall not be used within fifteen (15) feet of a building or lot line;
- (d) Fireplaces or pits shall be used on a stable level surface;
- (e) Fireplaces or pits shall not be used on any combustible deck, porch or patio;
- (f) Only clean, dry wood is permitted to be burned in fireplaces or pits. No trash, yard waste or construction material shall be burned;
- (g) If the fireplace is a propane unit, only propane shall be burned;
- (h) The smoke from the fireplace or pit shall not create a nuisance;
- (i) A fire extinguisher, garden hose or other method of fire control shall be readily available;
- (j) The fireplace or pit must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. The fire must be completely extinguished before the fireplace or pit is left unsupervised;
- (k) Fireplaces or pits shall not be operated when air quality is other than good or moderate as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and
- (l) Manufactured outdoor fireplaces and pits shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturers assembly, safety and operating instructions.

Clay fireplaces (Chimineas) are permitted in Madison. They must meet **all of the requirements listed above** for outdoor fireplaces as well as the following:

- Must have a spark arrester on the flue and a spark screen to cover the opening.
- **Shall not be used within (4) four feet of any combustible materials or in high winds.**

LP-assisted ignition fireplaces They must meet **all of the requirements listed above** for outdoor fireplaces as well as the following:

- Do NOT store/use gasoline or other flammable liquids in the vicinity of this unit.
- Never leave hose assembly connected when wood is burning.
- Once the wood is burning, immediately turn the regulator knob to "OFF" and disconnect the LP bottle and hose assembly.

Cooking fires are fires ignited and maintained for the express purpose of cooking food for human consumption. Once the cooking is complete, the fire **must be extinguished**. If the Fire Department responds and food is not being prepared, they will extinguish the fire. **A citation may be issued**. The size of the fire must be appropriate for use as a cooking fire. It is always the discretion of the Fire Officer to determine if the fire is intended for cooking.

Sky Lanterns The Fire Department does not allow the use of sky lanterns in the city. The user of the sky lantern would not be able to ensure that the lanterns were not near combustibles or that the use of the sky lantern would not result in an unwanted fire.

Charcoal & LP-Gas Grills and other Open-Flame Cooking Devices: Shall comply with MGO 34.308. Be sure to read the owner's manual!

- **Charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices** shall **not** be operated on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction. (Exceptions: one- and two-family dwellings and/or where buildings and decks are protected by an automatic sprinkler system). Make sure the coals are completely cooled down with water before disposing of them. Make sure all ashes are contained in a non-combustible container.
- **LP-gas burners** having an LP-gas container with a water capacity greater than 2.5 pounds [nominal 1 pound LP-gas capacity] shall not be stored or operated on balconies **unless they are served by exterior stairways**. (Exception: one- and two-family dwellings).

Fine particulate advisories and weather conditions

Outdoor fireplaces cannot be used if air quality is other than good or moderate. Contact the City of Madison Public Health Department at **608-266-4821** for fine particulate forecast. (More information is available at <http://www.airnow.gov/>.) It is important to consider weather conditions when using an outdoor fireplace or grill. Wind direction, humidity, and barometric pressure all affect smoke travel.

Other conditions

Never leave any fire unattended. If a fire is too hot to touch, it is too hot to leave. Leaving a fire when it is not fully extinguished could result in the fire rekindling.