

This pamphlet describes open burning regulations for single-family detached homes, duplexes and town-homes. Open burning in any other location, including apartments and condominiums, requires a permit and may be prohibited.

These regulations do not apply to barbecue grills or similar cooking devices.



If you have any questions regarding open burning regulations or would like to apply for a permit, please contact the Fire Prevention Division at 303-538-7602 or visit our website at gocot.net/fire



City of Thornton Fire Department

2300 Thornton Parkway

Thornton, CO 80229

303-538-7602

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gocot.net/fire

City of Thornton Fire Department
Open Burning
Regulations



What is open burning?



Open burning is an outdoor fire where wood or any combustible materials are burned for agricultural, training, entertainment, or other purposes approved by the Thornton Fire Department.

Open burning is allowed at single-family homes, duplexes, and townhomes without a permit, provided these regulations are met:

- Only small fires are allowed (maximum 3-foot diameter by 2-foot height) that are contained in a non-combustible chiminea, outdoor fireplace, fire pit, or other approved method.
- All openings in the container must be covered with wire mesh or other screening materials that will prevent the passage of sparks and embers.
- Fires must be kept at least 15 feet from structures.
- Fires must be constantly attended.
- The burning of yard waste, leaves, garbage, or other rubbish is prohibited in the City of Thornton, unless specifically exempted.

All other open burning requires a permit from the Thornton Fire Department.

Below are examples of approved containers for open burning. Other containment methods, such as a built-in pit or fire ring may also be approved.



Chiminea



Outdoor Fireplace



Fire pit



Mesh lid

Frequently asked questions

1. If I live in a condo or apartment building and have a small, contained fire on the common grass area and meet all regulations above, do I need a permit? Yes. Only detached homes, duplexes, or townhomes can have these fires without obtaining a permit.

2. Can my church group have a bonfire in our parking lot? No, unless this bonfire is part of a government-sponsored event. However, your group can have a small, contained fire as described in the open burning regulations and provided they obtain a permit from the Fire Department.

3. Can our public school have a bonfire at the Homecoming football game? Yes, as long as it is a government-sponsored (public school district) event. However, a permit is required.

4. My company would like to conduct fire extinguisher training for employees. Can we use real fire for the class? You may be able to burn combustibles for the purpose of fire extinguisher training, provided you obtain a permit, and you have a trained professional conducting the class. The Fire Department is generally unable to assist with these classes.

5. I just cleared out some heavy tree limbs and leaves from my backyard. Can I burn them instead of paying to have them removed? No. You would not be able to burn these items since the burning of leaves and yard waste is not allowed and there is no recognized agricultural purpose for the burn. Agricultural burning requires a permit.

6. I'm concerned when my neighbors use their outdoor fireplaces in their backyards. They follow all regulations, but the smoke bothers me. What can I do? The Fire Department can order any fire to be extinguished that doesn't comply with all regulations, creates a hazardous condition, or poses a health risk. We generally will not intervene if there is only an unpleasant odor or drifting smoke.

If you have any questions regarding residential open burning regulations, call the Thornton Fire Department at 303-538-7602 or visit us at our administrative offices at 2300 Thornton Parkway.