

Fire Watch: Chief Benson Reports

Springtime motivates people to clean up their yards of dead tree limbs, leaves, and other old landscape items. While cleanup is important in maintaining your home and its curb appeal, burning the landscape items is not the proper or safe way. Port Arthur fire code allows for bonfires, open burning, and recreational fires; however, both bonfires and open burning require [permits](#) issued by the Fire Marshal's Office to be considered legal.

Recreational fires are legal but must not have fuel greater than 3 feet in diameter, 2 feet high, and must be at least 25 feet from a structure or combustible materials. Unfortunately, recreational fires that are too large or too close to structures can turn into residential fires, dampening the fun you were having. Providing information to the community about what is [legal](#) and safe is an ongoing process to which the Port Arthur Fire Department is committed.

The Fire Marshal's Office has created a chart to assist residents in determining if their burn plans are safe and compliant. Follow the charted path or contact the Fire Marshal's Office at 409-983-8737 or fireprevention@portarthurtx.gov with any questions.

OPEN BURNING FLOW CHART

1. Is the fuel rubbish or trash?

NO

YES

2. Is the material in an enclosed container with a stack or chimney, such as a portable outdoor fireplace?

NOT ALLOWED

NO

YES

Is the portable outdoor fireplace at least 15 feet from structures or combustible material (unless at one- or two-family dwelling)?

NO

YES

NOT ALLOWED

ALLOWED

Is the fuel area larger than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height?

NO

YES

NOT ALLOWED WITHOUT PERMIT

Is the fire at least 25 feet from a structure or combustible materials (this includes dry vegetation)?

NO

YES

NOT ALLOWED

Is someone attending the fire, with a means to extinguish the fire?

YES

ALLOWED AS A RECREATIONAL FIRE