

AGRICULTURAL BURNING GUIDELINES

These guidelines define agricultural burning and discuss the implementation of state regulations on open burning.

BURNING FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES:

Regulation 7.07 (3) (b) states that open burning is allowed for activities associated with the normal pursuit of agriculture which the Department has determined necessary, which include but are not limited to pruning of blueberry diseased beehives. Regulation 7.07 (3) (c) allows open burning of brush and trees for agricultural land clearing.

Regulation 310 CMR 7.07 defines agriculture as those practices involved with the cultivation of soil for purposes of crop production and/or the raising of livestock when such crops are produced primarily for commercial food, and such livestock are raised primarily for commercial foodstuffs or for work purposes. Agricultural operations as defined as those operations which raise commercial foodstuffs and/or livestock on an area larger than one acre.

Using the above guidelines, fire chiefs in local communities should determine whether particular activities qualify for open burning under the regulations. If you have any questions concerning qualifications, contact the Regional Division of Environmental Protection / Bureau of Waste Prevention Office nearest you.

BURNING TIME FRAME:

Regulation 7.07 (3) (e) allows the disposal of brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris from January 15 to May 1. It specifies that burning will take place between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM along with other requirements. Open burning during these hours applies only to Section (e) of Regulation 7:07 (3); Sections (b), (c), and (d) give no time periods for open burning.

The department discourages burning of any materials in the evening when air stagnation conditions exist. Nocturnal inversions create severe air quality problems if burning occurs during the evening hours. The nocturnal inversion ceases when the earth becomes warm after sunrise. Therefore, the Department suggests that open burning permits for agriculturally generated materials be effective each day from two hours after sun-rise until 4 PM, and that the permits do not allow fires to be started past 12 noon. In this way, fires will occur only during the morning and early afternoon hours when ventilation (air movement) is best.

The Department requires that fire chiefs remain aware of air quality and atmospheric ventilation during the period for which a permit is issued. Call the DEP Regional Office nearest you for air quality updates before issuing a permit.

For further guidance on implementing open burning regulations, contact any DEP Regional Office