

BACKYARD CAMPFIRES



According to information from CT DEP's Air Bureau, backyard campfires in freestanding firepits or chimineas are legal with no permits required.* Only non-processed and untreated wood (i.e. typical firewood) can be used in backyard campfires.

Smoke from a backyard campfire is released at ground level and may enter a neighbor's yard in a concentrated form that can irritate the eyes, nose and lungs. While just about anyone may object to the odor or irritating effects of the smoke, asthmatics may be particularly sensitive.

The following are recommendations to decrease the adverse effects of smoke from backyard campfires:

- Only dry, properly cured and untreated wood should be used;

- Campfires should not be burned when air pollution levels are high due to stagnation and inversion;
- The following website can be checked for updates to the daily air quality index: www.ct.gov/deep/aqi

State Statute - 22a 174 (f) - does not allow residential campfires to create a public nuisance. If a backyard campfire is bothering a neighbor, the neighbor has the right to contact local authorities (police, local Fire Marshal) to request the campfire be extinguished. The local authority (police, Fire Marshal or peace officer) should come out and verify the situation and ask the originator of the campfire to put out the fire due to public nuisance. The affected neighbor can also call CT DEEP's Air Complaint Hotline to file a complaint (860-424-3436). Note that the DEEP's legal interpretation of backyard campfires causing a nuisance falls under the enforcement protocol of open burning and is not an 'infraction' but a 'crime' (misdemeanor), subject to fine and imprisonment.

***Note that the open burning of residential brush requires a Burning Permit signed by the local Fire Marshal.**

