

City of Vista Fire Department

Development Services Section
200 Civic Center Drive, Vista CA 92084

Guideline:

Open Burning and Recreational Fires



Guideline G-16

Date: June 2010

Open Burning and Recreational Fires Guideline

PURPOSE

The intent of this guideline is to provide the minimum standards necessary to meet the minimum safety requirements when conducting open burning and recreational fires. The requirements are prescribed in 2007 California Fire Code chapter 3 and the Public Resources and Health and Safety Codes.

SCOPE

This guideline applies to open burning, bonfires and recreational fires located within the City of Vista and the Vista Fire Protection District

Definitions

Open Burning - *The burning of materials wherein products of combustion are emitted directly into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Open burning does not include road flares, smudge pots and similar devices, or occupational uses typically considered open flames, or recreational fires.*

For the purpose of this guideline open burning is considered any open fire or bonfire that is not a recreational fire (see below). Generally these fires are for the burning of agricultural material or for the removal of vegetation considered a fire hazard.

Recreational Fires - *An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbecue grill or barbecue pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.*

Permits

Permits are required to conduct open burning. Open burning is also regulated by the Southern California Air Quality Management District (AQMD), and subject to a permit from AQMD. Applicants requesting a permit for grove maintenance shall be subject to the requirements of the Public Resources Code.

Permits are not required for recreational fires

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL FIRES (Open burning and recreational fires)

Attendance. Fires shall be constantly attended by an adult until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 4-A or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck shall be available for immediate utilization.

Notification. Prior to kindling any fire within the City of Vista or Vista Fire Protection District the person kindling the fire shall contact North-Com Fire Dispatch at (858) 756-3006.

OPEN BURNING & BONFIRES

General. A person shall not kindle or maintain or authorize to be kindled or maintained any open burning unless conducted and approved in accordance with Section 307 of the California Fire Code.

Prohibited Open Burning. Open burning that is offensive or objectionable because of smoke or odor emissions or when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous shall be prohibited.

Permit Required. A permit shall be obtained prior to kindling a fire for recognized silvicultural or range or wildlife management practices, prevention or control of disease or pest, or a bonfire. Application for such approval shall only be presented by and permits issued to the owner of the land upon which the fire is to be kindled.

CAL FIRE (formerly CDF) shall be responsible for the issuance of burn permits in the unincorporated area of the Vista Fire Protection District.

A permit from the Vista Fire Department is required for any open burning within the City of Vista. Evidence of a permit issued by AQMD shall be provided at the time of Fire Department permit application.

Location. The location for open burning shall not be less than 50 feet from any structure, and provisions shall be made to prevent the fire from spreading to within 50 of any structure.

Exceptions:

1. Fires in approved containers that are not less than 15 feet from a structure.
2. The minimum required distance from a structure shall be 25 feet where the pile size is 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height.

BONFIRES

A bonfire shall not be conducted within 50 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 50 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

RECREATIONAL FIRES

Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

Exception: Recreational fires shall be located not less than 15 feet from a structure when contained within an approved container or within an in-ground pit at least 24 inches deep.

An above ground fire ring made of non combustible material at least 24 inches deep is also permitted.