

## Open Burning Information

### RECREATIONAL FIRES

The definition of a recreational fire by the City of Elgin-adopted *International Fire Code* is: “An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for cooking food for human consumption.” There is no reference to campfires; therefore, campfires are not permitted inside the city limits.

**Material:** Fuel for a recreational fire shall consist of seasoned dry firewood, charcoal and other material approved by the Fire Code Official. The recreational fires shall be ignited with a small quantity of paper. The fire shall not be utilized for waste disposal purposes, and the fuel shall be chosen to minimize the generation of air contaminants.

**Permits:** Required

**Conditions:**

1. Limit the size of the recreational fire to no larger than 2' x 2' x 2' using seasoned, dry firewood only (about 4 logs).
2. Burn at a reasonable hour (no later than 11:00 pm) and for a reasonable length of time (3 hours).
3. Check with all neighbors (courtesy and health or environmental issues).
4. Have a hose or fire extinguisher present to extinguish the fire.
5. Consider weather conditions (windy conditions not to exceed 10 mph, severe dry conditions.)

If a complaint is received and any of the above conditions are violated, the fire will be extinguished. Remember, a recreational fire is for cooking food, not a campfire.

### BONFIRES

The definition of a bonfire by the City-adopted *ICC International Fire Code* is: An outdoor fire utilized for ceremonial purposes. A bonfire shall not be more than 5 feet (1524 mm) by 5 feet (1524 mm) by 5 feet (1524 mm) in dimension and shall not burn longer than 3 hours.

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



# ELGIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

550 Summit St • Elgin, IL 60120

**Materials:** Fuel for a bonfire shall consist only of seasoned dry firewood and other material approved by the Fire Code Official. The bonfire shall be ignited with a small quantity of paper. The fire shall not be utilized for waste disposal purposes, and the fuel shall be chosen to minimize the generation of air contaminants.

**Permits:** Permits are required by the City of Elgin approved by the City Chief as with the International Fire Code, shall be requested by and issued to the owner of the land upon which the bonfire is to be kindled.

**Conditions:**

1. Permit must be issued by the Fire Prevention Bureau.
2. Permit shall be signed by the Fire Chief.
3. Fire must be monitored at all times (person in attendance over the age of 21) with extinguishment plans in place, (water hose, portable fire extinguisher or equivalent).
4. Weather conditions that will limit the burn (windy conditions, dry conditions, etc.)

## PRAIRIE BURNS

**Permits** are issued for prairie land burns. **These permits are only issued with written approval from the Environmental Protection Agency, City of Elgin's Legal and Fire Departments.** There are specific instructions for the people conducting the burn as to extinguishment, safety, notification of burns, and times burn is permitted.

## OUTDOOR FIREPLACES

There have been many questions fielded in reference to the numerous types of outdoor fireplaces, fire rings and burning dishes. The most frequently asked question is: "Are these illegal?" and/or "Why do you allow them to be sold in Elgin?"

These items are not illegal; however, the recreational fire conditions apply, meaning they may be used for cooking purposes only. These items are sold in Elgin because they are not illegal and the market area is much larger than Elgin proper and other communities may not have the same restrictions or conditions.

Therefore, the use of these types of items for recreational fires, outside of cooking, is not permitted and will be extinguished. A request of the owner to voluntarily extinguish the fire is the best way to handle this situation. If the owner refuses to willingly comply, a call to 911 and the Fire Department shall extinguish the fire.

**For any questions, please call the Elgin Fire Prevention Bureau**

**(847) 931-6190**