

## **WHY IS RESIDENTIAL BURNING ILLEGAL IN LAKE COUNTY?**

Because of Lake County's proximity to a major metropolis like Chicago, our region is more susceptible to a major air pollution problem: ground level ozone, more commonly known as smog. The thick haze at ground level that we know as smog is created when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other air pollutants react in the presence of sunlight. Vehicle exhaust, gas pumps, industrial smoke stacks, and open burning, among many other sources, radiate VOCs. Governments regulate this type of pollution because it can cause or exacerbate respiratory, heart, and other health problems.

**Just think about it this way: Smoke from burning 5 pounds of leaves in your backyard contributes about one pound of air pollution.**

By eliminating open residential burning, we can also eliminate the harmful effects of direct exposure to smoke. These include:

- Eye, nose, and throat irritation
- Lung irritation and congestion, particularly for those with chronic respiratory conditions like asthma, emphysema, etc.
- Shortness of breath and coughing
- Stomach or intestinal problems
- Headaches or memory loss
- Skin irritations or burns
- Eye damage

## **SAFE PRACTICES FOR BURNING WHEN THE OPEN BURN BAN LIFTS**

The lack of rainfall this year caused all open burning, not just residential open burning, to be banned in counties throughout the state, including Lake County. While this ban currently includes recreational burning, it is important to be aware of safety measures to more safely enjoy open fires after the burn bans lift.

Recreational fires include barbeques, campfires, and fires for scouting activities in campgrounds and incorporated areas. Here are some guidelines to follow to ensure your recreational burning is safe:

- According to state law, these fires may only be fueled by clean wood products, paper, charcoal, or clean burning petroleum products such as lighter fluid.
- As an alternative to the above, it is recommended that you use an electric lighter, charcoal chimney, or newspaper as a lighting aid.
- There are limits on the size of fires and the length of time they may burn, so notify the local fire department if you're planning a bonfire to check the safety measures.
- Just remember, these fires can never be used for disposal purposes, such as burning yard waste or trash.

Summer is a time to enjoy outdoor activities of all varieties, but remember that your actions have an impact on your neighbors and the environment! Make sure your campfires are safe and legal, and you can help Indiana preserve our environmental future!

**Energy Saving Tips:**

- Turn off appliances, lights and equipment when not in use. (Save: 2%)
- Unplug electronic devices and chargers when they aren't in use - most new electronics use electricity even when switched "off." Turn computers and printers off at the power strip. (Save: 1-2 percent)
- Unplug or recycle that spare refrigerator in the garage if you don't really need it. This will save you up to \$150 per year! (Save: 10-20 percent)