

COLUMBIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Controlled Burning Regulations OPS-010

Standard Operating Guidelines Manual

RESCINDS: "Controlled Burning Regulations," 12/11/91

PURPOSE: To establish a procedure for fire suppression personnel to determine if controlled burning regulations are being violated.

SCOPE: All CRFS personnel, Columbia Central

POLICY: It is sometimes difficult for firefighters to determine whether or not a controlled burn is legal and whether the fire department is obligated to extinguish the fire. There are overlapping regulations which complicate this decision, however the following guidelines should be used.

I. In the City no open burning is permitted, with the following exceptions:

A. When a permit is issued by the Fire Marshal. (Only 10 to 20 such permits are issued annually and only for special circumstances.) The permit must be on the premises at all times.

B. Recreational fires such as barbecues grills, campfires, and bonfires, except that propane barbecue grills may not be used on apartment balconies above the first floor.

C. Salamanders and other closed devices used for heating by construction workers. Barrels with woodscraps are not acceptable.

II. In the County an ordinance restricts burning in residential areas except for cooking, as long as no nuisance is created. Open burning is allowed for clearing land provided the fire is on at least one acre of land and no less than 250 feet from public roadways, and 250 feet from residential, commercial and industrial property. Also the wind directions and ambient air must not allow such areas to be affected by the smoke.

III. The Forestry Commission requires anyone burning to call the state-wide telephone number to receive permission. If permission is granted, a permit number is issued which must be available at the site.

IV. A citation can be issued or an arrest made for a violation of the ordinances prohibiting burning by the authority having jurisdiction, (i.e. Fire Marshal, Sheriff's Department, DHEC, etc.)

V. The multiple regulations make it difficult to define all circumstances and these guidelines are greatly simplified. In general, any fire that is creating a nuisance or a fire hazard must be extinguished immediately whether or not it is otherwise allowed. **When in doubt it is better to extinguish a fire than to assume the liability for allowing it to burn.** Assistance with difficult situations can be obtained in the City by notifying the City fire Marshal and in the County by notifying the County Fire Marshal.