

Open Burning..... Safe burning begins with proper preparation.

Use these best management tips to prevent potential problems:

- Allow the material several days of drying time for a more effective burn and reduced smoldering.
- Watch for favorable weather conditions and safe wind speeds. Wind speeds of 5 to 15 mph, steady from a desirable direction are preferred.
- Be aware of drought-like conditions and any bans on burning that may be in place.

SMOKE & AIR QUALITY ... The airborne particles in smoke are microscopic in size and can present serious health problems. Short-term exposure to particles in smoke can aggravate existing conditions such as lung disease, acute bronchitis and asthma.

Some groups of people are more susceptible to smoke:

- Children are because their respiratory systems are often not fully developed.
- Older adults can be especially if they have heart or lung diseases.
- Susceptible individuals include people with asthma, cancer and allergies.

Environmental effects of smoke:

- Visibility can be reduced due to the presence of smoke in the air.
- Fine particles in smoke can be transported long distances and deposited on water, land and property causing nuisance and affecting such things as acidity and nutrients.
- The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to set national standards for the particulate matter that can be found in smoke. Elevated particulate matter concentrations make it more difficult to attain national air quality standards.

Open Burning - Safety and Good Stewardship

It is important to be a good steward and avoid situations that can endanger the public.

Safety - Identify potential hazard areas such as roads, residences and electric lines. It is most desirable to burn with the wind blowing away from the road.

Personal safety is also important. Proper clothing made of wool or cotton is necessary, covering the body, arms and legs. A cap, gloves and boots are also recommended for worker safety.

Notification - For safety, it is recommended that before a burn is conducted, neighbors and the local fire department should be notified. This can prevent misunderstandings, unnecessary fire calls and poor public relations.

Contact Information:

Polk County Public Works Department
Air Quality Division
5885 NE 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50313
Phone: 515-286-3351
Fax: 515-875-5599

