

Factors to Consider Before Burning Debris in Tooele County

1. Afternoon Clearing Index - The level at which pollutants disperse, must be forecast at 500 feet or above. This is to ensure that you are not contributing to the poor air quality issue.

2. Time of day - The reason that the above factor is referred to as the Afternoon Clearing index is that smoke clears better with solar radiation. Burning between 11am and 4pm will reduce air quality impacts. Debris burning is limited to daylight hours and fires must be fully extinguished 30 minutes before sunset.

3. Wind - Do not burn under windy conditions. Less than 12mph is a good rule of thumb for when it is safe to burn. Depending on your burn site and the surrounding conditions you may consider a lower threshold. If wind increases to dangerous levels during your operation you should extinguish the fire immediately.

4. Humidity - Living in the desert we are surrounded by fine fuels such as grass that are rapidly effected by the amount of humidity in the atmosphere. When relative humidity levels drop below 25% the potential for an escaped fire is greatly increased.

Here is a website that shows all of these weather factors (click your location on the map):

<https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/forecast/wxtables/index.php?lat=40.59436578827896&lon=-112.35109604362516&clindex=1>

5. Materials - Debris burning is limited to vegetation that was grown on the property that it is to be burned. Absolutely no other material can be included in your burn pile. Ensure that your pile is reasonably dry; wet materials not only take longer to consume, they also emit higher amounts of emmissions. Piles should be cleared of as much dirt as possible; dirt covered material is starved of oxygen and can smolder for weeks possibly resulting in an unattended fire citation. Use care when burning leaves or pine needles as these can result in long range traveling fire brands.

6. Burn Barrels - Burn barrels or burn containers are not permitted in the state of Utah unless a resident can prove that the municipality or county that they live in does not provide garbage disposal services.

7. Notifications - You are required by law to notify the nearest Fire Department of the estimated time that you will be burning, contacting Tooele County Dispatch (435) 882-5600 will satisfy this requirement. Alerting your neighbors of your intent to burn is not only a good idea to alleviate panic, it could also make the difference in preventing emergency services personnel from responding to your operation which could possibly impact a true emergency.

8. Burn Site - Choosing an adequate burn site is of the utmost importance. Ensure that you have the necessary separation from any combustible vegetation, fences, or structures; radiant heat, convection and firebrands can contribute to escaped fires. Do not burn underneath powerlines as thick smoke can and will arch electricity. Consider your surroundings and the potential for fire spread. Should your fire escape and it is determined a reckless act you could be held liable for damages, suppression costs, and face criminal prosecution.

