

BACKYARD BURNING

The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) regulates and monitors both residential and commercial burning, as well as burning on public lands within the county.

Burn Permits

You need an APCD burn permit if you are:

- Burning more than two acres of vegetation
- A commercial business
- Clearing land for development
- A public agency clearing vegetation to maintain roads or ditches



Burn Days

All burning must take place on permissive burn days. Burn days are determined by meteorologists from the [California Air Resources Board](#). For burn day information, call the Tuolumne County APCD Burn Line at **209-533-5598**.

What Can Be Burned

- Clean, dry vegetation can be burned. Burning dry vegetation creates less smoke.
- Only light what will burn in 12 hours or less. Smoldering fires often are a nuisance to your neighbors.
- Burning vegetation that has been transported from one property to another is not allowed.
- **CALFIRE** requires your pile size to be 4 feet or less in diameter when CALFIRE permits are required.

What Cannot Be Burned

- Burn barrels are prohibited.
- Household garbage such as cans, glass, diapers, furniture, plastics, rubber, tires, tar paper, asphalt shingles, demolition debris, and construction materials (such as treated lumber insulation, paints, coatings, and metal) cannot be burned. When burned, these things can produce toxins that create health problems.
- Burning stumps at your residence is strongly discouraged. Burning them in a commercial setting is not allowed.



- Burning leaves and pine needles is also discouraged due to the excessive smoke that is generated.

Burn with Less Smoke

In order to reduce the amount of smoke when burning, you should burn between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when smoke dispersion conditions are best. Be sure your vegetation is clean and dry. Cover it with a tarp to keep out rain. Required vegetation drying times are as follows:

Type of Vegetation	Drying Time
Green straw and grasses	3 days
Smaller than 6 inches in diameter	3 - 6 weeks
Greater than 6 inches in diameter	6 weeks or more

Fires containing dry leaves and pine needles should be actively managed by repeatedly stirring the pile to allow for better oxygen circulation and less smoke.

Alternatives to Burning

Vegetation can be disposed of in many ways other than burning. Please consider the following suggestions:

- Use anything greater than 4 inches for firewood.
- Compost your leaves and use them in your garden.
- Chip or shred vegetation and let nature do the rest. Chipped or shredded vegetation can also be used as mulch for plants to help hold moisture in the soil or prevent erosion.
- Take your vegetation to the Cal Sierra Green Waste site on Camage Avenue in Sonora or the Plainview Slash Site across from the west entrance to Twain Harte on Highway 108. Both of these locations charge a fee for disposal.