



PITMAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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Rules for Fire Pits - Open Burning

There are multiple rules regarding fire pits in the Borough of Pitman depending upon the fuel the pit burns, the size of the container the fire is in and whether or not the fireplace structure is permanent and approved. Permanent masonry outdoor fireplaces and natural gas fueled fire bowls and log sets are regulated by the NJ Uniform Construction Code (UCC) requirements, and are not subject to the rules below. Citronella candles and other types of small table-top candles are permitted, but adequate clearances should be maintained to combustibles.

All other forms of open burning are regulated by the NJ Uniform Fire Code (UFC) and enforced by the Pitman Bureau of Fire Safety. **Open burning of any kind is prohibited on public property; including parks, alleyways, streets, sidewalks and public recreation areas without a fire permit.** Open burning includes, but may not be limited to portable open burning clay solid fueled fireplaces known as "chimeneas," small round "campground" fireplaces, bonfires, elevated torches known as tiki torches, and sky lanterns, fireworks of any kind (including "firecrackers and "sparklers"), and rubbish.

Bonfires are not permitted to be lit or maintained without a permit from the Pitman Bureau of Fire Safety. The burning of leaves, rubbish, or other waste vegetation is prohibited. The rules for open burning and recreational fires as outlined in the International Fire Code, New Jersey Edition (2006) appear below.

NJ Uniform Fire Code Rules Regarding Open Burning and Recreational Fires

For all types of open burning except fireplaces inside single family dwellings:

- Section 307.1.1 states, *"Open burning that is offensive or objectionable because of smoke emissions or when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous shall be prohibited."* That means that even if you have your fire in an approved container, if the smoke is entering a neighbors residence, or the weather poses a risk for fire danger, you may not start or maintain the fire, and the fire department may order the extinguishment of any fire. Whenever the fire department requires the extinguishment of any open burning, there is no appeal process and failure to extinguish the fire as ordered may result in arrest and/or severe monetary penalties.

For solid fueled (wood, coal, etc.) recreational fires:

- Section 307.4.2 states, *"Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet (7,620 mm) of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet (7,620 mm) of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition. Fires in approved containers shall be permitted,*

provided that such fires are not less than 15 feet (4,572 mm) from any structure.” That means if you have an approved container, the minimum clearance to any structure, including dwellings, sheds, canopies, any other structure on the property, or the property line, must be at least 15 feet. Only containers approved after the UCC permit and inspection process fall into the category of an “approved container.”

- A recreational fire is (Section 302.1), “...burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.” Minimum clearances to combustibles and property lines for this type of fire are 25 feet.
- Barbeque Grills and Charcoal burners (Section 308.3.1) “Charcoal burners, other open-flame cooking devices, and outdoor fireplaces shall not be operated or stored on combustible balconies or decks or within 5 feet (1524 mm) of combustible construction.”

Exceptions:

1. Detached one- and two-family dwellings
2. Where a variance is issued in writing by the Fire Official.

The same rules apply to Liquid Propane (LPG) barbeque grills (Section 308.3.1.1).

There are other rules regarding open burning and recreational fires. If the type of fire you wish to maintain does not appear in these rules, please contact our office prior to your event to ensure that the burning is permitted.