

Household waste— why not burn it?

It's against the law in Arkansas.

Household waste contains more toxins now than it did a generation ago. Our typical trash includes plastics and other items that contain toxic chemicals. When burned, these items release more than irritating ash into the air; they create harmful emissions that can increase the risk of heart disease, aggravate respiratory ailments such as asthma and emphysema, and cause rashes, nausea, or headaches.

Dioxins, extremely toxic chemicals, are often emitted when some materials that don't contain dioxins in their original state undergo a chemical change when burned.

Arkansas law prohibits the burning of household wastes to protect residents and visitors from hazardous emissions.

In the past, burning was the only way for many rural Arkansans to manage trash, but now reasonably priced curbside collection or drop-off centers for garbage and recyclables are available for nearly everyone.

For more information, contact your city hall or county judge's office.



What about yard waste?

There is no state law against on-site burning of yard waste (grass clippings, leaves, limbs) when there is not a burn ban in effect, but it may be illegal in some municipalities. If in doubt about laws or burn bans in your area, contact your local fire department or law enforcement agency.

Debris burning is the leading cause of wildfires in Arkansas, according to the Arkansas Forestry Commission.

ADEQ encourages you to consider alternatives to burning yard wastes to protect air quality and prevent wildfires.

Yard waste is not allowed in landfills. Choose from these options instead:

- Mulch grass clippings and leave them on the ground for a healthier lawn.
- Mulch fallen leaves to use on your lawn, shrubs and flower beds.
- Compost yard waste and add to your soil to enrich it.
- Check with your solid waste hauler or city or county government to see if a collection or drop-off program is available for yard waste.



For more information about waste disposal, recycling, composting and your regional solid waste management district, visit the Solid Waste Division pages on the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality website at www.adeq.state.ar.us.

Contacts

- **Report pollution problems from open burning to:**
ADEQ Air Division, 501-682-0773
- **Report nuisance, fire or safety complaints about open burning to:**
Your local fire station, police or sheriff's office
- **Waste management options:**
Local government or the
ADEQ Helpline, 501-682-0923
- **Other environmental concerns:**
ADEQ Helpline, 501-682-0923 or
info@adeq.state.ar.us.