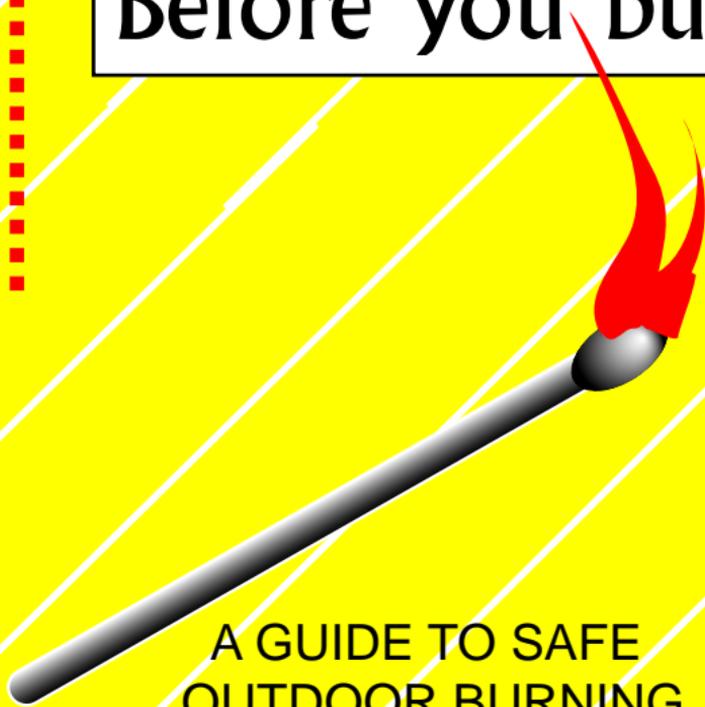




THINK

Before you burn



A GUIDE TO SAFE
OUTDOOR BURNING

Careless debris burners cause more than 40% of wildfires in South Carolina every year. DON'T be one of them. You are responsible for your fire. If it escapes, you will be fined. If it damages property, YOU WILL BE LIABLE!

Produced by the
South Carolina Forestry Commission
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Before you . . .

- **B**e prepared
- **U**nderstand the laws about burning
- **R**espect the weather
- **N**ever leave your fire

1. **B**e Prepared. ✓

- Is there another way to get rid of debris?
- Can you use it as mulch or compost? Is it recyclable?
- Gather tools you will need.
- Keep a shovel or hoe, rake, attached hose or dependable water supply close at hand.
- Consider your capabilities .
- Do you have enough time to remain with the fire?**
- Is someone available to help should the fire escape?**
- Are you physically capable of staying with your fire and controlling it?**
- Reduce the risks.
- Divide large piles into manageable small piles.
- Separate your fire from surrounding leaves and dry grass.**
- Clear a break down to the mineral soil.
- Be aware that heavy logs and stumps will burn and smoke for a long time.
- Don't burn near homes or other structures.
- Stay away from roads.
- Don't burn near other flammable fuels.**
- Check for overhanging branches.
- Have a plan.

2. **U**nderstand the laws about burning.

SC Code of Laws Section 48-35-10

"Starting fire in woodlands, grasslands and other places shall be unlawful unless certain precautions are taken."

Those precautions include notifying the SC Forestry Commission prior to the burn (see county phone numbers on the back page), clearing the area around the site, assuring adequate personnel and equipment are **available to keep the fire from spreading, and making sure the fire is under control before leaving.**

SC Code of Laws Section 16-11-180

"Negligently allowing fire to spread to lands or property of another." If your fire escapes, you will be fined. If it damages property, you will be liable. It is also against the law to burn household garbage and trash, tires, chemicals, plastics and building materials anywhere in South Carolina.

3. **R**espect the Weather.

- ✓ *Check daily weather forecasts.*
- ✓ *How long has it been since the last rainfall?*
- ✓ *What is the relative humidity?*
- ✓ *It is safer to burn a few days after a soaking rain or when the humidity is higher than 30%.*
- ✓ *Are there high or gusty winds?*
- ✓ *Wind causes branches, leaves and pine needles to dry out. A debris fire will burn more intensely when it's windy. Gusty winds can blow sparks into areas you don't want to burn.*
- ✓ *What is the wind direction?*
- ✓ *Think about where your smoke will blow.*
- ✓ *Don't burn if your smoke will blow onto roads, airports or occupied buildings.*
- ✓ *Don't burn during an atmospheric inversion. Smoke will settle and increase air pollution.*

4. **N**ever Leave your Fire.

- **Watch for flying sparks.**
- Pay attention to smoke drift.
- **Notice changes in the weather.**
- **If you are concerned about safety, put the fire out.**
- **Make sure it is dead out before you leave.**