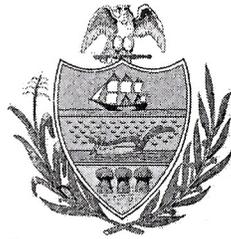


COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

On November 5th, 2014, the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) passed a revision to its Open Burning regulation. The changes affect all citizens of Allegheny County, and were made in order to better protect public and environmental health.

We are contacting you today to make you aware of the new regulation which ACHD began enforcing on January 1st, 2015. As local municipal officials, we rely on you to help us reach all Allegheny County residents, and to gauge the needs of your constituents.

ACHD inspectors will do their part to respond to citizen complaints and enforce the regulation, however, municipal or local government units are also authorized to enforce this regulation and can often respond while open burning is occurring. ACHD encourages municipalities, local fire departments, and local police departments to work together to minimize nuisance burning.

Open burning in Allegheny County is defined as any fire or combustion from which air contaminants pass directly into the open air without passing through a flue. The definition of open burning has been revised to include any fire or combustion which occurs in a chiminea, fire pit, outdoor fireplace, or grill. The ACHD open burning regulation has been in place since about 1970 in order to minimize the public health hazards of open burning. Since wood smoke contains fine particulate pollution and air toxics, and can aggravate respiratory and cardiovascular health issues, this revision further strengthens the rule to reduce this impact.

The revised Open Burning regulation gives greater discretion to ACHD, and municipal, inspectors to end fires that are unhealthy, or causing a nuisance. It also sets limits on burning, including limiting fires to a maximum overall size of 3 feet wide by 3 feet long by 2 feet high for wood burning.

The regulation also restricts materials that may be combusted in open burning to clean wood, propane, or natural gas, with exceptions that allow for using charcoal in outdoor fireplaces or grills for the purpose of cooking, and also for using fire logs, paraffin logs or wood pellets in outdoor fireplaces.

Importantly, the regulation restricts all recreational open burning, except for the commercial preparation of food, on air quality action days. This restriction is not applicable to charcoal or propane grills. Air quality action days occur when the Air Quality Index (AQI), a measurement of pollution levels in the region, is at the "orange" or "unhealthy" level. In 2013, there were 15 air quality action days. Allegheny Alerts, a free County notification system, can be used to alert officials and citizens of air quality action days when burning is prohibited. Signups can be made online at www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts. Alerts are free and can be delivered via email, text, or through a free

Everbridge mobile app. The AQI can also be viewed online at www.airnow.gov or the ACHD website, www.achd.net.

The revisions to the Open Burning regulation are applicable to all municipalities of Allegheny County. ACHD encourages each of you as a municipal official to evaluate the needs of your constituency to determine if a stricter ordinance would be beneficial.

The Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP), a local environmental advocacy group, has offered to help any municipality interested in adopting a stricter ordinance. Please contact Jamin Bogi at jamin@gasp-pgh.org or (412) 924-0604 for more information.

We encourage you to make your constituency aware of this new regulation, to aid ACHD in enforcement of the regulation, and to evaluate if adoption of a stricter ordinance would benefit your communities. We appreciate all the work you do to help us protect our residents and make Allegheny County one of the most livable communities in the country.

Enclosed you will find a regulation fact sheet and the full regulation.

Please contact us at 412-578-8120 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayme Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jayme" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Graham".

Jayme Graham
ACHD Air Quality Program Manager

ACHD 24-Hour Complaint line: 412-687-2243
www.achd.net/air/burning/