



MECKLENBURG COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

RECREATIONAL FIRE GUIDELINES

The purpose of this form is to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for recreational fires.

The North Carolina Fire Code, defines recreational fires as an outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purpose.

The North Carolina Fire Code, Section 307.4.2, regarding recreational fires:

Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

- Recreational fires are usually fairly small, but can still represent a significant fire hazard if the area in which they are kindled is not kept free of combustible trash and debris. Basic fire safety practices followed by campers make good guidelines. No fire should ever be kindled in a location where it would endanger structures or would be likely to ignite combustible materials close by.

The North Carolina Fire Code, Section 307.5, regarding attendance during burning:

Open burning; bonfires, recreational fires and use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be **constantly** attended until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable table fire extinguisher... with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose, or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization.

- Having one or more individuals responsible for keeping watch on a fire, even one of small size, is the first line of fire prevention... For practical purposes as well as for fire safety, some means of extinguishing a kindled fire should be kept close at hand... however, no matter how much extinguishing equipment is available, it may prove useless unless someone is tending the fire and can sound an alarm.

The fire code allows camp fires, recreational fires, and fire pits as long as the two above sections are in compliance.

NOTE: *All other open burning is prohibited in Mecklenburg County without a permit issued by the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's Office. No open burning other than the recreational fires is allowed inside the City of Charlotte.*

The North Carolina Fire Code, Section 307.3, regarding the authorization of the fire code official to extinguish an outside fire:

The fire code official is authorized to order the extinguishment... of open burning that creates or adds to a hazardous or objectionable situation.

- The fire code provides support for extinguishing any bonfire, open burning, or recreational fire that creates a nuisance, a hazardous condition, or an objectionable situation.