

Regulations

Under the *Bushfires Act (1954)* lighting of fires is prohibited on total fire ban days. This includes backyard burning.

Beyond this restriction, backyard burning is governed by local laws, which vary between local governments:

- Some authorities have a total ban on backyard burning of waste.
- Some authorities require permits for backyard burning.
- Laws may vary according to the time of year or day of the week.
- Laws may vary according to the lot size or lot zoning.
- Some local laws state backyard burning should not occur on days when a haze alert has been issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

In many local governments in Western Australia it is an offence to cause smoke nuisance. If backyard burning on your property is creating a nuisance for your neighbours, action could be taken.



For more information

on wood heaters and air pollution, visit the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's website:

www.dwer.wa.gov.au/burnwise

or email

burnwise@dwer.wa.gov.au

Phone: 6364 7000

More information on domestic wood smoke is also available from your local government's environmental health section.

Your local contact is:



Backyard burning



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**



Backyard burning of green waste is a significant source of local air pollution in some areas. This is made worse when wet garden waste is burnt.

Wood smoke contributes to haze or particle pollution in the air. It is bad for human health and can create a nuisance for neighbours.

Wood smoke and health

Wood smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles, which are the product of incomplete combustion. Wood smoke is similar to tobacco smoke in composition and has known health impacts. These include:

- eye, nose and throat irritation
- increased asthma and respiratory problems
- headaches, nausea and dizziness
- aggravation of chronic heart and lung conditions.

Wood smoke is especially dangerous for people with existing respiratory problems, for the very young and the elderly. Even if you are healthy, wood smoke can make you feel lethargic and generally unwell.

Smoke from backyard burning is particularly bad if green or wet wood is burnt.

Episodes of poor air quality are also exacerbated as backyard burning is often undertaken during stable weather conditions or when there is a temperature inversion. Inversions occur during cool, clear, windless conditions when the air directly above the ground cools down. A layer of cold air becomes trapped beneath the warmer air above it. Air pollutants such as particles build-up in this layer of trapped cold air and can persist for many hours.

In some areas 'cleaning up' properties to reduce fire risk is a key reason for backyard burning. Property maintenance to manage fire is essential. However there are several alternatives to backyard burning.



Alternatives to backyard burning include:



- mulching your green waste at home and using it on your garden

- taking your green waste to a local waste facility
- if your council offers periodic verge side collection of green waste –



- Plan property maintenance to coincide with verge side collections.
- Stockpile your green waste for collection.



- if your council provides green waste collection bins, use these for removing your green waste.

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