

Recreational Fires, What are the rules in Mound?

Many of our Mound residents enjoy having a recreational fire on their property. Based upon the current fire code ordinance for the City of Mound, a recreational fire is legal as long as the rules of the ordinance are followed.

Residents who want to have a recreational fire on their property should be aware of and must follow the rules of the *Recreational Fire Ordinance* to insure compliance.

What is the ordinance definition of a “Recreational Fire? A recreational fire is defined as a fire set for cooking or warming or for other recreational purposes. A recreational fire is not to be more than 3 feet in diameter and 3 feet in flame height at any time. An approved fire pit must be used and the fire pit must have a noncombustible separation between the fire area and any adjoining combustible material (I.e. dry grass or leaves). The typical noncombustible material used for fire separation in fire pits would be objects such as bricks or stone.

Why is this topic important? Many residents call the fire department office and ask me about the rules for having recreational fires. Often, the calls or conversations are about fire and life safety concerns, or about the problems or inconveniences created by recreational fire residual smoke.

What are the some of the main problems with recreational fires? Recently, with our cooler summer weather many of our residents want to enjoy the fresh air with their house windows open. Many residents also want to sleep with their windows open. Smoke from neighborhood recreational fires often drifts and creates problems for people as they do not want to smell the lingering smoke.

Important note: All of us need to be considerate of others and remember that in many cases, people have medical or health problems such as emphysema or asthma and they simply cannot tolerate the smoke.

What should all residents know about the city ordinance? Please read the following important points and highlights regarding the City of Mound Fire Ordinance which all pertains to recreational fires. Also included below are some simple common courtesy guidelines when enjoying a fire at your residence.

- No person shall, commence, conduct or allow any recreational fire in violation of the City of Mound *Recreational Fire Ordinance*.
- Recreational fires must be in an approved firebox, a barrel or similar container used for an outdoor fire, but this does not include grills or barbecues used principally for the cooking of food.
- All recreational fire must be attended by a competent, unimpaired adult at all times. This means a person over eighteen (18) years of age who is not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, who shall be the responsible party for directly supervising an open burn and who shall be responsible for ensuring compliance.

- Approved materials for use in recreational fires are dry or unpainted wood including: twigs, branches, limbs, “duraflame type logs”, charcoal cordwood, and untreated dimensional lumber, including clean pallets. Materials to be used do not include wood that is green or treated, leaves or needles, grass clippings, garden waste, wood that is rotten, oil soaked or treated with paint, glue or preservative, plywood, particle board, chip board, finished paneling, or painted, or stained cardboard or paper.
- Proper equipment to control and extinguish the fire shall be immediately available to the attendant at the site of the fire at all times during burning. This may include, hand tools, hose lines, and water buckets.
- A means of summoning the Fire Department shall be available for immediate use by the attendant.
- The fire may not be started or continued in situations where prevailing winds or other factors create an unsafe condition or direct smoke toward other nearby residences.
- The fire shall be located a safe distance from any structure or combustible material and shall be contained in an approved outdoor fireplace or fire pit. Fires in approved containers such as an outdoor fireplace shall not be less than 15 feet from any combustible piled material or a structure.
- Recreational fires may be conducted at any time of the day or night, but shall not be left unattended to burn or smolder.

Recreational fires shall not be allowed, if any of the following conditions exist:

- A fire hazard exists or develops during the course of the burn.
- Pollution or nuisance conditions develop during the course of the burn.
- The fire is left unattended, or the attendant is impaired.
- The fire is allowed to smolder with no flame visible and is unattended.

Compliance to the ordinance will certainly benefit all Mound residents and will help reduce unnecessary and unpleasant neighborhood disputes. **Please remember!** Every resident has the right to open up their home for fresh air and a good night’s sleep.

Residents who have recreational fires should obtain a copy of the *Recreational Fire Ordinance* to insure compliance. A copy of the *Recreational Fire Ordinance* can be picked up at Mound City Hall, at the Mound Fire Station, or can be printed from the Mound Fire Department website at www.moundfire.com.