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## Outdoor Burn Regulations

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Outdoor burning can have long lasting and hazardous impacts on public health and on the environment. San Luis Valley Public Health Partnership is encouraging residents to learn about Colorado’s rules and regulations for outdoor burning.

While many people have burned garbage for years, doing so can expose you and your family to hazardous toxins. In the past, garbage consisted of primarily natural materials. Today’s garbage is a mix of plastics and synthetics that release carcinogens and other toxins when burned, potentially causing serious environmental and health problems. Some of these toxins will fall to the ground around the burn site and downwind, leading to contamination that can last for decades. Additionally, these toxins can gradually work their way into your ground water, further exposing you, your family and neighbors.

“Burning tires is particularly dangerous,” says Lynnea Rappold, San Luis Valley Regional Environmental Health Program Manager. “Not only are tire fires difficult to put out, they also produce a large amount of smoke which can harm elderly individuals, children and those with asthma. They also release many chemicals that are known to cause cancer, in particular polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and dioxins which can contaminate vegetation and then be ingested by people or animals.”

These safety concerns are the basis of the Colorado Air Quality Control Regulation 9, which states that the only items that should be burned are untreated, natural wood (sticks and branches), leaves, dry prairie grass, slash and weeds. A permit is required to burn these items. Open burn permit applications may be downloaded at [cdphe.apopenburning@state.co.us](mailto:cdphe.apopenburning@state.co.us). There is no fee required for general open burning permits.

Campfires, non-commercial cooking fires and agricultural burning are exempt from the permit requirement. At no time should tree stumps, tires, chemicals, plastic, cut lumber, construction debris or trash be burned.

“Becoming aware of the impact outdoor burning has on air quality and how it affects you and your family is a positive first step,” Rappold said. “Each of us taking action to protect our health and improve air quality is the ultimate goal.”

For more information on Colorado Open Burning, citizens can visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s “Outdoor burning” webpage at: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/categories/services-and-information/environment/air-quality/outdoor-burning>.



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