FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINE

RECREATIONAL FIRES

This fire safety guide outlines the fire safety requirements and prohibitions related to recreational fires within the City of Whitefish and the surrounding Whitefish Rural Fire Protection District. Recreational fires are specifically exempted from the Fire Code definition of open burning and therefore do not require a permit for open burning.

The Fire Code defines a recreational fire as an outdoors, solid fuels fire set for cooking, warming, pleasure, ceremonial, or similar purposes. Furthermore, a recreational fire may only burn natural vegetation no larger than 4-inch in diameter. The fuel being burned is to be contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, chimera, barbeque grill, or barbeque pit. The total fuel area must be 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height. Untreated dry wood or lumber may be burned. Dimensional lumber that has been treated, sealed, painted or has glue applied may not be burned at any time. The burning of plywood or OSB is also prohibited.

Charcoal burners and other open-flame cooking devices fueled by combustible or flammable gases or liquids and cooking devices using electricity as a heating source are not considered recreational fires. These devices do fall under the open-flame cooking sections of the fire and building codes. For your safety, charcoal burners and outdoor barbeque grills should always be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Burn barrels used as a warming fire are permitted when the temperature is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less. These fires must be contained within a metal barrel of 55 gallons or less. The burning of construction waste, trash, yard waste, or any other material prohibited from being burned in burn barrels under Flathead County Air Pollution regulations.

Regulations/Requirements

1. **Property Owner Permission.** Recreational fires may only be conducted with the property owner's permission and the fire must not endanger the property of another.
2. **Distance from Combustibles.** Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material. There shall be no overhead obstructions.
3. **Fuel Area Limitations.** A recreational fire shall have a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height.
4. **Allowable Fuels.** Only dry natural vegetation no larger than 4-inch in diameter, untreated dry wood, or lumber may be burned. Dimensional lumber that has been treated, sealed, painted, or has glue applied may not be burned at any time. NO garbage, construction site debris, yard rakings, or any other material that generates large amounts of smoke may be burned.
5. **Attendance.** Fires shall be constantly attended until completely extinguished and out cold to touch, by a sober adult.
6. **Means of Extinguishment.** A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, water barrel, garden hose, etc., shall be available for immediate utilization.

While recreational fires do not require a permit these fires may not be started during any periods when fire restriction are in place or when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous.

The Whitefish Fire Department has the authority to order the extinguishment of any open burning or recreational fire that does not comply with the established rules, where a permit was required but not obtained, or where the burning creates or adds to a hazardous or objectionable situation.

If the fire department needs to extinguish your fire you may be responsible for the fire suppression costs.

If you have any questions regarding fire safety requirements within the City of Whitefish or the Whitefish Rural Fire Protection District contact:

Fire Marshal Travis Tveidt at 406-863-2481 or tveidt@cityofwhitefish.org