

Allen County Fire & EMS District

Code Enforcement Division

Open Burning

Open burning in Allen County is regulated by the Allen County Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Allen County Code 8-20). What is allowed depends on how a property is zoned and used, and on what is being burned. Only clean wood products — boards, branches, leaves, and similar vegetation — may be burned. Burning trash, garbage, or other refuse is never permitted. This page is a general summary; the ordinance itself governs.

Residential Property

Homeowners in agricultural and residential zones may burn clean wood products that originated on the property, without a permit, as long as the following conditions are met:

- Burn only between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Do not burn when wind speed is below 5 mph or above 20 mph.
- Keep the fire at least 20 feet from any structure, road, or power line, and at least 100 feet from any fuel storage area, pipeline, or neighboring structure.
- Never let the smoke or emissions become a nuisance to neighbors.

Open burning is not allowed on residential property containing five or more units (such as apartment complexes) without a variance from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

Commercial Property

Open burning is not permitted on property that is zoned or used for business, apartment complexes, or mobile home parks. Burning on these properties is allowed only if a variance from IDEM (326 IAC 4-1) has been approved and issued.

Agricultural Property

On agricultural property, clean wood products that originated on the premises may be burned under the same time, wind, and nuisance conditions listed for residential property above — no permit is required for ordinary wood-product burning.

A notification permit from the fire department is required before burning an undesirable wood structure on agricultural (A-E) property. The application must be submitted at least 10 calendar days in advance, and this type of burn must be kept at least 200 feet from any structure, road, power line, fuel storage area, pipeline, or neighboring structure, and attended at all times until fully extinguished.

Fires Allowed in All Areas

Some fires are allowed in all areas without the distance restrictions above, including campfires and cookout fires, small recreational or comfort fires (such as a bonfire while sledding or ice skating), and approved Department of Natural Resources prescribed burns. Ceremonial fires and bonfires — such as those for school events or scouting activities — are allowed with advance notice to the fire department serving the area.

This summary reflects Allen County Code 8-20. If your property is located within a city or town, additional or different rules may apply — please check with your local municipality to verify the requirements for your address. Burn bans, when in effect, apply regardless of local rules. Before burning, check your county's current burn ban status at <https://www.in.gov/dhs/burn-ban-map/>.