

Smoke Management

Fact Sheet No. 1



The burning of garden waste and wood fires can produce excessive smoke, causing a nuisance and discomfort to neighbours as well as contributing to the pollution haze in the Perth hills.

If you are undertaking burning activities in the City of Kalamunda you need to be aware of the legislative requirements and ensure you manage the smoke created wisely, and not cause a smoke nuisance or fire risk.

If burning is your preferred option, make sure you visit the City of Kalamunda website for information on current burning period restrictions, as well as your obligations under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* (as amended).

www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/fire

Under no circumstances may burning in the open occur when the fire danger is HIGH OR ABOVE

Consider Alternatives to Burning Off

- » **Green Waste Wheelie Bin:** All garden refuse can be placed in your green top wheelie bin to a maximum of 70kg. (prohibited: hot and cold ashes, rocks, soil, liquids, solvents and heavy materials that overload or damage the bin.)
- » **Free Skip Bins:** Residents are entitled to three free skip bins each year, in any combination of green and general waste bins. The waste from green skip bins is mulched and reused, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. Please see City website for details.
- » **Walliston Transfer Station:** open Thursday to Sunday 8:00am to 3:30pm (Friday close at 2:30pm). For more details visit www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/waste.



Avoid burning compacted materials and lawn clippings

Weather Conditions

Before burning always check with the Bureau of Meteorology to check the weather conditions in your local area and if a haze alert has been issued: www.bom.gov.au

Weather conditions have an impact on how smoke from your burn will affect your neighbours.

- » On days when the upper layer of the atmosphere is warmer than the air at ground level, smoke can get trapped under an inversion layer and take a long time to disperse. If smoke from other fires is visible as a flat and distinct low-level layer, any smoke you produce is also likely to become trapped and cause a possible nuisance.
- » Light winds can aid in dispersing smoke, but take care that the direction of the wind does not blow the smoke across roads or highways, causing further hazards.
- » Strong winds can make your fire difficult to contain and create a higher fire risk. Always check for warnings.

Be A Good Neighbour

Always give your neighbours plenty of notice of your intention to burn.

Advance notice gives your neighbours time to get the washing off the line and/or make arrangements for anyone with respiratory issues who may be badly affected by smoke. You should also be prepared to reschedule your burn in the event that a neighbour has planned an outside activity on the same day. Events like children's birthday parties or family get-togethers can be spoiled by smoke nuisance so be prepared to be flexible.





Burn wood fired heaters efficiently to avoid excessive smoke

Moisture Content

To minimise the amount of smoke produced you are only permitted to burn dry dead material.

The burning of soft furnishings, mattresses and CCA treated timber is not permitted. Plant material which is green, partly green or wet from rain will create more smoke than dry material. Green waste does not burn efficiently and piles of smouldering material can create long lasting smoke hazards.

If you have been stock piling material, cover it with a tarpaulin or use some other means to keep it dry until you are able to burn it. Even if the plant material is dead, and it has become wet in recent rains, it will not burn efficiently and will create a lot of thick grey smoke. This is particularly true for a pile of leaves that have been sitting and compacting uncovered for a while; the top layer may look dry but the material underneath may be extremely wet. Know what you are burning!

Control Your Load

Do not burn more than you can manage and ensure your fire is attended by an adult at all times.

- » It is best to only burn a smaller fire and gradually add more material rather than burning one big fire.
- » Avoid dumping a lot of leaves and twigs in one hit as these may smother the flame and lead to more smoke.
- » Keep a running hose close by in case flames spread, and, when finished, always fully extinguish your fire with water.

Wood Fired Heaters

Another major source of smoke emissions that can create smoke nuisances are wood fired heaters, combustion stoves and open fire places. Incorrectly operated heaters or poorly maintained flues can create large quantities of smoke and the potential for a chimney fire because of

the buildup of uncleared soot and creosote from previous seasons.

Tips for correct operation:

- » Initially, always run your heater on high for 20 to 25 minutes to help dry out the wood and result in a more efficient burn.
- » Do not overfill your heater: allow air to circulate with a minimum of 2cm between logs to create a more efficient cleaner burn and less smoke.
- » Use paper and dry kindling whenever starting or reigniting your fire. Never throw kerosene or similar on a smouldering fire.
- » In wood-fired heaters place logs to the rear, as they are designed to have air flow from behind the glass door into the fire. Also, alternate the placing of logs across each other, not all parallel, to help create a better flow.
- » Check your smoke output and colour as this can indicate how well it's burning and if your flue is working.
- » Remember to clean your flues regularly.

Caution

Wood smoke consists mainly of particulate matter but also contains gases such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, ozone and benzo(a)pyrene that are known to be irritating and potentially cancer causing.



Burning material at any time which creates a smoke nuisance is an offence under the *Health Act, Local Government Act 1995*, and *Keeping and Control of Animals and Nuisance Local Law 2011, Part 3*.

An owner or occupier of lands shall not set fire to or allow to be set on fire any rubbish, refuse or material other than dry green waste without the written approval of the Local Government. Pallets, tyres and CCA treated timber must not be burnt at any time.

Maintaining Public Standards

The City of Kalamunda Health Service is responsible for maintaining public health standards within the community. Environmental Health Officers undertake a variety of statutory and non-statutory activities in order to ensure that the health of both residents and visitors is preserved. Where complaints regarding smoke nuisances are reported, the situation will be promptly investigated and may result in prosecution.

kalamunda.wa.gov.au

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