

*News Release from Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
October 20, 2009*

Restrictions on open burning remain in effect year round; burners advised to check air quality reports

COEUR d'ALENE — People considering open burning to dispose of slash or other vegetative debris in Idaho are reminded by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that burning remains restricted by air quality rules and permit requirements year-round.

Although the Department of Lands may not require burn permits for slash burning on state-controlled lands after October 20, this does not mean open backyard burning and land clearing burning can automatically occur at any time.

Air quality and smoke impacts must be considered no matter what time of year burning takes place. Burning may be prohibited because weather conditions are not conducive to smoke dispersion, and permits may be required in some areas.

Additionally, crop residue disposal permits are required year-round. Crop residue disposal includes fields where the crop was grown, bluegrass fields, pastures, and broken bales left in the field. (Burning of bales removed from the field is prohibited.)

Land owners that plan to burn slash must follow a prescribed plan that ensures impacts on neighbors are avoided. Visit the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group's web site at www.smokemu.com for information on forecasted weather conditions and possible burn restrictions.

DEQ encourages burners to consider contracting with a wood grinding service to dispose of land clearing debris or yard waste rather than burning. Grinding services may be provided free under certain conditions.

If no alternative to burning is available, DEQ advises potential burners to check with local fire protection districts to find out if a permit is required and to call DEQ's Air Quality Advisory Hotline at 1-800-633-6247 or log on to the agency's web site (link at left) to check whether burning has been restricted.

A daily air quality and burn advisory forecast is also available by email. Sign up on DEQ's Web site at www.deq.idaho.gov.

DEQ offers the following guidelines to help minimize smoke impacts from burning:

- Burn only dry material. Green limbs and other vegetative garden waste smolder and produce excessive smoke.

- Keep burn pile small and manageable. Large piles develop lots of ash, robbing the pile of oxygen and causing smoky conditions.
- Burn during the midday hours when solar heating and ventilation is at its maximum. To prevent smoke from lingering near the ground never start a burn in the evening or during early morning hours. Complete burning before dusk.
- Do not burn green slash piles and use additional precautions when burning near residential areas.

Burners are also reminded that Idaho's open burning rules prohibit the burning of most processed or manufactured materials such as garbage, plastics, demolition debris, tires, asphaltic materials, treated lumber, and animal waste.