

Terry E. Branstad

Governor

Kim Reynolds

Lt. Governor



Steven L. Ponsetto

Acting Commissioner

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Burn Bans

1. What does it mean when a burn ban is issued in my county?

A burn ban means that conditions are drier than normal and the chances of a fire growing out of control are much higher. A burn ban is issued to prohibit outdoor fires to vegetation, rubbish, or yard waste when it would otherwise be permitted.

2. Who can request a burn ban?

A Fire Chief, Board of Supervisors, or Emergency manager speaking on behalf of a majority of the Fire Chiefs in a particular county can request the State Fire Marshal issue a burn ban. Burn bans are issued by county but nothing prevents a city or single fire district from issuing a burn ban in their area. It will not be a state issued burn ban however.

3. Can a camp fire, fire pit or back yard fire place be used during a burn ban?

Yes. Be sure to check with local officials as some ordinances at camp grounds or cities may prohibit these whether a state issued burn ban is in place or not.

4. What precautions must I take to have a campfire while a burn ban is in place?

Campfires are permitted as long as they are properly contained, monitored and extinguished. However, some parks prohibit campfires so be sure to check with local officials.

5. What is the fine for violating a burn ban?

Persons who violate a burn ban may be subject to a simple misdemeanor citation that requires a court appearance. A magistrate could sentence the offender up to 30 days in jail or \$100 in fines if found guilty.

6. How do I find out if my county is in a burn ban?

Visit the State Fire Marshal web page at www.dps.state.ia.us. Along the right side tabs you will see a tab marked burn bans. If you click on that tab a map will appear on the page. Counties that are under a burn ban will appear in red. Below the map is the date and time the ban was requested or lifted and the person requesting the ban.

7. Why are burn bans important?

Burn bans are likely to be requested every spring and fall. This year the state has seen near unprecedented dry conditions. Fall winds and dry vegetation allow fires to spread very rapidly. Many people underestimate the fire risk during these extended periods of dryness placing them in high risk of becoming injured by outdoor fires. Many outdoor grass and yard waste fires are a matter of wanting to burn rather than establishing a need to burn.

8. Are there any provisions to burn during a burn ban?

Local Fire Chiefs may choose to issue a permit to burn for a specific case where burning is needed.