

CITY OF VERGAS
COUNTY OF OTTER TAIL
STATE OF MINNESOTA
Proposed revision May 24, 2023

92.00 OPEN BURNING

92.60 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

FIRE CHIEF and ***ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF***. The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief of the Fire Department which provides fire protection services to the city.

OPEN BURNING. The burning of any matter if the resultant combustion products are emitted directly to the atmosphere without passing through a stack, duct or chimney, except a recreational fire as defined herein. Mobile cooking devices such as manufactured hibachis, charcoal grills, wood smokers, and propane or natural gas devices are not defined as open burning.

RECREATIONAL FIRE. A fire set with approved starter fuel no more than three feet in height, contained within the border of a recreational fire site using dry, clean wood; producing little detectable smoke, odor or soot beyond the property line; conducted with an adult tending the fire at all times; for recreational, ceremonial, food preparation for social purposes; extinguished completely before quitting the occasion; and respecting weather conditions, neighbors, burning bans, and air quality so that nuisance, health or safety hazards will not be created. No more than one recreational fire is allowed on any property at one time.

RECREATIONAL FIRE SITE. An area of no more than a three-foot diameter circle (measured from the inside of the fire ring or border); completely surrounded by non-combustible and non-smoke or odor producing material, either of natural rock, cement, brick, tile or blocks or ferrous metal only an which area is depressed below ground, on the ground, or on a raised bed. Included are permanent outdoor wood burning fireplaces. Burning barrels are not a recreation fire site as defined herein. Recreational fire sites shall not be located closer than 25 feet to any structure.

RUNNING FIRE. An attended fire allowed to spread through surface vegetative matter under controlled conditions for the purpose of vegetative management, forest management, game habitat management, or agricultural improvement.

STARTER FUELS. Dry, untreated, unpainted, kindling, branches, cardboard or charcoal fire starter. Paraffin candles and alcohol are permitted as starter fuels and as aids to ignition only. Propane gas torches or other clean gas burning devices causing minimal pollution must be used to start an open burn.

VEGETATIVE MATERIALS. Dry leaves, dry grass clippings, twigs, branches, tree limbs, untreated or unpainted wood that contains no glues or resins, and other similar materials. Paper and cardboard are not considered vegetative materials.

WOOD. Dry, clean fuel only such as twigs, branches, limbs, presto logs, charcoal, cord wood or untreated dimensional lumber. The term does not include wood that is green with leaves or needles, rotten, wet, oil soaked, or treated with paint, glue or preservatives. Clean pallets may be used for recreational fires when cut into three-foot lengths or less.

'92.61 PROHIBITED MATERIALS.

(A) No person shall conduct, cause or permit open burning oils, petrol fuels, rubber, plastics, chemicals treated materials, or other materials which produce excessive or noxious smoke such as tires, railroad ties, treated, painted or glued wood composite shingles, tar paper, insulation, composition board, sheet rock, wiring, paint or paint fillers.

(B) No person shall conduct, cause or permit open burning of hazardous waste or salvage operations, open burning of solid waste generated from an industrial or manufacturing process or from a service or commercial establishment or building material generated from demolition of commercial or institutional structures.

(C) No person shall conduct, cause or permit open burning of discarded material resulting from the handling, processing, storage, preparation, serving or consumption of food.

(D) No person shall conduct, cause or permit open burning of any leaves or grass clippings.
Penalty, see ' 92.99

' 92.62 PERMIT REQUIRED FOR OPEN BURNING.

No person shall start or allow any open burning on any property in the city without first having obtained a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permit in accordance with Minnesota Statutes (M. S.) 88.16 and 88.17 open burn permit, except that a permit is not required for any fire which is a recreational fire as defined in ' 92.60.

Once an open burn permit is received, a copy of burn permit must be provided to City Clerk-Treasurer, 48 hours prior to said burn, with the following additional information: types of materials to be burned, and the date and time burning will take place.

Penalty, see ' 92.99

' 92.63 PURPOSES ALLOWED FOR OPEN BURNING.

(A) Open burn permits may be issued only for the following purposes:

(1) Elimination of fire of health hazard that cannot be abated by other practical means.

(2) Ground thawing for utility repair and construction.

(3) Disposal of vegetative matter for managing forest, prairie or wildlife habitat, and in the development and maintenance of land and rights-of-way where chipping, composting, land spreading or other alternative methods are not practical.

(4) Disposal of diseased trees generated on-site, diseased or infected nursery stock, trees, diseased beehives.

(5) Disposal of unpainted, untreated, non-glued lumber and wood shakes generated from construction, where recycling, reuse, removal or other alternative disposal methods are not practical.

(6) Disposal of yard waste materials at the Vergas Yard Waste Site.

(B) Fire training permits can only be issued by the DNR.

(C) Permits for the operation of permanent tree and brush burning sites may only be issued by the DNR.
Penalty, see ' 92.99

' 92.64 PERMIT APPLICATION FOR OPEN BURNING; PERMIT FEES.

(A) Open burning permits shall be obtained by making an application on a form prescribed by DNR. Except, the City will still require proof of a DNR burning permit even when the ground is snow covered for all fires not requiring a DNR permit.

Penalty, see ' 92.99

' 92.65 PERMIT PROCESS FOR OPEN BURNING.

Upon receipt of the completed open burning permit application and permit fee, the Fire Chief, or Assistant Fire Chief, if he or she reasonably believes necessary, may schedule a preliminary site inspection to locate the proposed burn site, note special conditions, and set dates and time of permitted burn and review fire safety considerations.

' 92.66 PERMIT HOLDER RESPONSIBILITY.

(A) Prior to starting an open burn, the permit holder shall be responsible for confirming that no burning ban or air quality alert is in effect. Every open burn event shall be constantly attended by the permit holder or his or her competent representative. The open burning site shall have available, appropriate communication and fire suppression equipment as set out in the fire safety plan.

(B) The open burn fire shall be completely extinguished before the permit holder or his or her representative leaves the site. No fire may be allowed to smolder with no person present. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to have a valid permit, as required by this subchapter, available for inspection on the site by the Police Department, Fire Department, MPCA representative or DNR forest officer.

(C) The permit holder is responsible for compliance and implementation of all general conditions, special conditions, and the burn event safety plan as established in the permit issued. The permit holder shall be responsible for all costs incurred as a result of the burn, including but not limited to fire suppression and administrative fees.

Penalty, see ' 92.99

' 92.67 REVOCATION OF OPEN BURNING PERMIT.

The open burning permit is subject to revocation at the discretion of DNR forest officer, the Fire Chief, or Assistant Fire Chief or the City of Vergas. Reasons for revocation include but are not limited to a fire hazard existing or developing during the course of the burn, any of the conditions of the permit being violated during the course of the burn, pollution or nuisance conditions developing during the course of the burn, or a fire smoldering with no flame present.

Penalty, see ' 92.99

‘ **92.68 DENIAL OF OPEN BURNING PERMIT.**

If established criteria for the issuance of an open burning permit are not met during review of the application, it is determined that a practical alternative method for disposal of the material exists, or a pollution or nuisance condition would result, or if a burn event safety plan cannot be drafted to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief, or Assistant Fire Chief or the City of Vergas, these officers may deny the application for the open burn permit.

‘ **92.69 BURNING BAN OR AIR QUALITY ALERT.**

No recreational fire or open burn will be permitted when the city or DNR has officially declared a burning ban due to potentially hazardous fire conditions or when the MPCA has declared an Air Quality Alert.

Penalty, see ‘ 92.99

‘ **92.70 RULES AND LAWS ADOPTED BY REFERENCE.**

The provisions of M.S. ‘ ‘ 88.16 to 88.17, as these statutes may be amended from time to time, are hereby adopted by reference and made a part of this subchapter as if fully set forth at this point.

‘ **92.71 EXTERNAL SOLID FUEL-FIRED HEATING DEVICES (OUTDOOR WOOD BURNING STOVES).**

(A) *Definitions.*

(1) **EXTERNAL SOLID FUEL-FIRED HEATING DEVICE.** A device designed for external solid fuel combustion so that usable heat is derived for the interior of a building, and includes solid fuel-fired stoves, solid fuel-fired cooking stoves, and combination fuel furnaces or boiler which burn solid fuel. Solid fuel-fired heating devices do not include natural gas-fired fireplace logs or wood-burning fireplaces or wood stoves in the interior of a dwelling.

(2) **PERSON.** An individual, partnership, corporation, company or other association.

(3) **STACKS OR CHIMNEYS.** Any vertical structure incorporated into a building and enclosing a flue or flues that carry off smoke or exhaust from a solid fuel-fired heating device, especially, the part of such a structure extending above a roof.

(B) *Requirements for operation.*

(1) Any dense smoke, noxious fumes, gas and soot, or cinders, in unreasonable quantities, or any use of an external solid fuel-fired heating device to burn solid fuels other than those solid fuels for which the external solid fuel-fired heating device was designed, is declared a public nuisance.

(2) No person may install, use or operate an external solid fuel fired heating device on a lot less

than four acres in size.

(3) All stacks or chimneys must be constructed to withstand high winds or other related elements and in accordance to the specifications of the manufacturer of the external solid fuel- fired heating device. The stack height shall be a minimum of 25 feet above ground level but shall also extend at least as high as the height of the roofs of residents within 500 feet. All stacks or chimneys must be of masonry or insulated metal with a minimum six-inch flue.

(4) All external solid fuel-fired heating devices must be setback a minimum of 50 feet from all property lines.

(5) All external solid fuel-fired heating devices must be set back a minimum of ten feet from any principal or accessory structure.

(C) *Fuels.*

(1) Only fuels designed for burning in an external solid fuel-fired heating device may be burned. No garbage may be burned in an external solid fuel-fired heating device.

(2) The only fuel permitted to be burned is untreated fuel. Wood may not be treated, processed, stained, finished or painted - specifically prohibited woods include plywood, particle board and similar products. Other fuels, such as corn, shall not contain any additives, treatments or chemicals. No petroleum products or processed materials of any kind may be burned.

' 92.99 PENALTY.

Violation of any provision of this chapter, including maintaining a nuisance after being notified in writing by first class mail of a violation of any provision of this chapter, shall be a misdemeanor and punished as provided in ' 10.99