

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **EPD Now Requires Air Curtain Destructors for Land Clearing Activities in Six Additional Georgia Counties**

(ATLANTA – September 20, 2011) As Georgia continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to take care of our limited natural resources, especially the air that we breathe. Results from the 2010 Census show that the following Georgia counties have indeed grown, with each now containing more than 65,000 residents: Barrow, Bulloch, Newton, Troup, Walker and Walton. A county population of over 65,000 triggers air quality requirements for all land clearing activities under the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Open Burning Rules.

The Open Burning Rules require anyone burning vegetative material for the purpose of land clearing to use an Air Curtain Destructor (ACD). An ACD is a forced air pit incinerator that generates a barrier of air (or “air curtain”) over a fire, when activated over a fire pit. The ACD limits the amount of smoke released into the air during the burning process. The curtain of air traps the smoke and forces it back into the hot burning fire instead of out into the atmosphere. The smoke is then re-burned until most of it is gone. This makes a much cleaner burn, emitting considerably less smoke and pollution. As county populations increase, neighborhoods and businesses grow closer together. People are more likely to feel the effects of smoke pollution.

Georgia’s Open Burning Rules are designed to protect human health and public safety. Wood smoke contains particulate matter and more than 100 other chemical compounds and pollutants. Particulates can lodge deep in the lungs, causing structural damage while reducing resistance to infection. Long-term exposure may lead to chronic obstructive lung disease and an increased risk of cancer.

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For counties with populations over 65,000, an ACD is required year-round for burning vegetative debris from land clearing activities with additional conditions. A summary of the additional conditions are as follows:

- Local fire department and Georgia Forestry ordinances and regulations must be followed at all times. Check with them first to determine if a burn permit can be issued.
- The ACD must be located at least 300 feet from any occupied structure, and no more than one ACD can be operated within a 10-acre area at one time.
- Only wood wastes can be burned, and the amount of dirt on or in the material being burned must be minimized.
- No burning is allowed before 10 AM and after one hour before sunset.
- No smoke emissions exceeding 40 percent opacity may be produced except during the ignition and the changing of the pit.

The open burning requirements for counties with populations over 65,000 are in addition to the summer burn ban that applies to 54 counties in the northern half of the state from May 1 through September 30. For a complete list of rules and regulations, as well as an operating guide for using an ACD, please go to the EPD Open Burning Website by clicking on Open Burning Rules flame at <http://www.georgiaair.org/> . If you have questions or need guidance regarding the use of ACDs, you may call your local EPD District Office at for more information at the phone number below:

Barrow, Newton and Walton Counties: Athens EPD District Office - 706-369-6376

Bulloch County: Brunswick EPD District Office - 912-264-7284

Troup County: Macon EPD District Office - 478-751-6612

Walker County: Cartersville EPD District Office - 770-387-4900

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