

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division • Air Protection Branch

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April 2006

Open Burning Ban May through September Atlanta Ozone Nonattainment Area and Surrounding Areas

FACT SHEET

Why Is The Ban Needed?

In areas across the State of Georgia, during the summer months, the ozone in the air we breathe can reach unhealthy levels. Ozone is formed when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides coming from manmade and natural sources react in the presence of sunlight. A major source of these pollutants is the burning of fuels and other combustible materials. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has identified open burning as a significant contributor of the pollutants that form ozone. Therefore, open burning in these areas must be restricted during the summer months.

Where and When Does the Ban Apply?

The ban covers the 54 counties that comprise and surround the Atlanta Ozone Non-attainment Area. Additional counties have been added to include Ozone Non-Attainment in 3 other areas of the State including Augusta, Macon, and the Georgia Portion of Chattanooga. The counties subject to the ban include: Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Butts, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Coweta, Crawford, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Richmond, Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Twiggs, Upson, Walker and Walton.

The burn ban is in effect in the 54 counties from May 1 through September 30 each year.

What Types of Open Burning Are Banned?

No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit open burning in any area of the State except as follows:

1. Reduction of leaves on the premises on which they fall by the person in control of the premises, unless prohibited by local ordinance and/or regulation.
2. Carrying out recognized agricultural procedures necessary for production or harvesting of crops.
3. The “prescribed burning” of any forest land by the owners or the owner’s designee.
4. The “slash burning” of any forest land by the owners or the owner’s designee.

5. For recreational purposes or cooking food for immediate human consumption.
6. Fires set for purposes of training fire-fighting personnel when authorized by the appropriate governmental entity.
7. Acquired structure burns provided that an Authorization to Burn certificate has been issued by the Division.
8. Disposal of vegetative debris from storm damage.
9. For weed abatement, disease, and pest prevention.
10. Operation of devices using open flames such as tar kettles, blow torches, welding torches, portable heaters and other flame-making equipment.
11. Open burning for the purpose of land clearing or construction or right-of-way maintenance provided the following conditions are met:
 - (i) Prevailing winds at the time of the burning are away from the major portion of the area's population;
 - (ii) The location of the burning is at least 1,000 feet from any occupied structure, or lesser distance if approved by the Division;
 - (iii) The amount of dirt on or in the material being burned is minimized;
 - (iv) Heavy oils, asphaltic materials, items containing natural or synthetic rubber, or any materials other than plant growth are not being burned; and
 - (v) No more than one pile 60 feet by 60 feet, or equivalent, is being burned within a 9-acre area at one time.
12. Disposal of all packaging materials previously containing explosives, in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor Safety Regulations.
13. Open burning of vegetative material for the purpose of land clearing using an air curtain destructor provided the following conditions are met:
 - (i) Authorization for such open burning is received from the fire department, if required, having local jurisdiction over the open burning location prior to initiation of any open burning at such location;
 - (ii) The location of the air curtain destructor is at least 300 feet from any occupied structure or public road. Air curtain destructors used solely for utility line clearing or road clearing may be located at a lesser distance upon approval by the Division;
 - (iii) No more than one air curtain destructor is operated within a ten (10) acre area at one time or there must be at least 1000 feet between any two air curtain destructors;

- (iv) Only wood waste consisting of trees, logs, large brush and stumps which are relatively free of soil are burned in the air curtain destructor;
- (v) Tires or other rubber products, plastics, heavy oils or asphaltic based or impregnated materials are not used to start or maintain the operation of the air curtain destructor;
- (vi) The air curtain destructor is constructed, installed and operated in a manner consistent with good air pollution control practice for minimizing emissions of fly ash and smoke;
- (vii) The cleaning out of the air curtain destructor pit is performed in a manner to prevent fugitive dust; and
- (viii) The air curtain destructor cannot be fired before 10:00 a.m. and the fire must be completely extinguished, using water or by covering with dirt, at least one hour before sunset.

(b) Specific County Restrictions.

1. In the counties of Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Spalding and Walton, the only legal exceptions to the general prohibition against open burning during the months of May, June, July, August and September shall be exceptions numbers 2, 5, 6, 10 and 12 under subsection (a) above provided, however, that such burning, whenever feasible, be conducted between 10:00 a.m. and one hour before sunset.
2. In the counties of Banks, Barrow, Butts, Chattooga, Clarke, Dawson, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Heard, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Oconee, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Putnam, Troup and Upson, the only legal exceptions to the general prohibition against open burning during the months of May, June, July, August and September shall be exceptions numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 12 under subsection (a) above provided, however, that such burning, whenever feasible, be conducted between 10:00 a.m. and one hour before sunset.
3. In the counties of Bibb, Catoosa, Columbia, Crawford, Houston, Peach, Richmond, Twiggs, and Walker, the only legal exceptions to the general prohibition against open burning during the months of May, June, July, August and September shall be exceptions numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 12 under subsection (a) above provided, however, that such burning, whenever feasible, be conducted between 10:00 a.m. and one hour before sunset.
4. Except as noted in subsections 1, 2, and 3 above, in the counties whose total population, as listed in the latest census, exceeds 65,000, the only legal exceptions to the general prohibition against open burning shall be exceptions numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 13 under subsection (a) above, provided, however, that such burning, whenever feasible, be conducted between 10:00 a.m. and one hour before sunset and does not cause air pollution in quantities or

characteristics or of a duration which is injurious or which unreasonably interferes with the enjoyment of life or use of property in such area of the state as is affected thereby.

- (c) Except for a reasonable period to get a fire started, no smoke the opacity of which is equal to or greater than 40 percent shall be emitted from any source of open burning listed in subsections (a) and (b) above, except as follows. Prescribed burning, slash burning, agricultural burning and acquired structure burning are not subject to the 40 percent opacity standard in this paragraph.
- (d) The Director may allow open burning prohibited under paragraphs (a) and (b), upon a determination that such open burning is necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare of the people of the state of Georgia, or there are no reasonable alternatives to the open burning.
- (e) Prescribed burning and slash burning of forest land conducted under subparagraph (b)2 and (b)3 are subject to authorization by the Georgia Forestry Commission to include burning restrictions during air pollution episodes or periods when weather conditions are conducive to formation of air pollution episodes.
- (f) Definitions.
 - 1. "Prescribed burning" is a fire set under controlled conditions to burn forest understory and used as a forest management practice to establish favorable seedbeds, remove competing underbrush, accelerate nutrient cycling, control tree pests, enhance wildlife habitat, and contribute to ecological benefits.
 - 2. "Slash burning" is a fire used as a forest management practice and set to remove trunks, stumps, branches, residue, and other wastes left on land after the removal of timber.
 - 3. "Acquired structure burn" is the burning of a house, building or structure for the exclusive purpose of providing training to fire fighting personnel or arson investigators.

Authority: O.C.G.A. Section 12-9-1 et seq., as amended.

What are the Alternatives?

The open burning ban will result in more solid waste. Alternatives, which result in the reuse or recycling of this waste, should be pursued, where feasible. Some alternatives are:

- √ Yard trimmings (leaves, brush, grass clippings, shrub and tree prunings, vegetative residuals, etc.). These have been banned from certain landfills effective September 1, 1996.
- √ Composting, mulching, chipping, natural decomposition, etc. are recommended alternatives. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) brochure, "Composting at Home in Georgia," tells you more about composting yard trimmings. It is available on the Web at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/EnvironmentalManagement/index.asp>.
- √ Many municipal landfills and convenience centers accept yard trimmings from residents and process them into compost and mulch. Contact your local solid waste department to learn about local yard trimming recycling options. You can also call 1-877-Earth911 Cleanup or log on to <http://www.earth911.org/master.asp> to find local information for yard trimming management and other recycling options.
- √ For more information on yard trimmings management, contact the Department of Community Affairs, Office of Environmental Management at (800) 359-4663.
- √ Land clearing debris (trees, stumps, limbs, etc.).

Although it is recommended that land clearing debris be managed in the same manner as yard trimmings, it is important to note that these materials are not legally considered yard trimmings, and are therefore, not banned from landfills. Recommended alternatives include:

- √ Chip, shred, or grind the debris on site and reuse as mulch, erosion control, or walk paths.
 - √ Several companies in Georgia offer mobile, on-site grinding services. These grinding services can be found in your local yellow pages, or in the DCA Recycling Markets Directory (go to <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental/> and click on "Georgia Recycling Markets" or check the attached Table 1, "Land Clearing Debris - Recycling and Disposal Options").
 - √ For more information on re-use options, contact Stephanie Busch with the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD) at (404) 651-5120.
- √ Bury the debris on site in an inert landfill, in accordance with the rules for Solid Waste Management. A guidance document, "Inert Waste Landfill Operations" has been posted on <http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/environ> (go to "Solid Waste Management" located under "Technical Guidance").
- √ Haul the debris to a commercial or municipal processing/grinding/composting operation.
 - √ Processing/grinding/composting operations can be found in your local yellow pages, or check the attached Table 1, "Land Clearing Debris - Recycling and Disposal Options".
- √ Haul the debris to a permit-by-rule inert waste landfill.
 - √ Inert landfills can be found in your local yellow pages, or check the attached Table 1, "Land Clearing Debris - Recycling and Disposal Options".
- √ Haul the debris to a permitted construction and demolition (C&D) landfill.

√ The C&D landfills can be found in your local yellow pages, or check the attached Table 1, “Land Clearing Debris - Recycling and Disposal Options”.

Although it is not recommended, the debris may be accepted at some municipal solid waste landfills. For the location of these facilities, contact the city/county solid waste department or a private hauler.

For more information about the Open Burning Ban, contact the EPD’s Air Protection Branch at (404) 363-7000 or the appropriate EPD District office for a specific county as shown below. Questions about options for handling the solid waste can be directed to the EPD’s Land Protection Branch at (404) 362-2537.

Note: Your assistance in distributing this FACT SHEET to interested parties is greatly appreciated. A copy has also been posted at <http://www.gaepd.org/>

Coastal District (Brunswick)	912.264.7284	912.262.3160	One Conservation Way Brunswick, GA 31520
Coastal District (Savannah)	912.353.3225	912.353.3234	6555 Abercorn Street Suite 130 Savannah, GA 31405
East Central District	706.792.7744	706.792.7774	1885 Tobacco Road Suite A Augusta, GA 30906
West Central District	478.751.6612	478.751.6660	2640 Shurling Drive Macon, GA 31211
Mountain District (Cartersville)	770.387.4900	770.387.4906	P O Box 3250 16 Center Road Cartersville, GA 30120
Mountain District (Atlanta)	404.362.2671	404.362.2712	4244 International Parkway Atlanta, GA 30354
Northeast District	706.369.6376	706.369.6398	745 Gaines School Road Athens, GA 30605
Southwest District	229.430.4144	229.430.4259	2024 Newton Road Albany, GA 31701

Bartow, Carroll, Chattooga, Cherokee, Cobb, Dawson, Douglas, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Haralson, Lumpkin, Paulding, Pickens, and Polk

Mountain District Office
Phone: (770) 387-4900

Clayton, Coweta, DeKalb, Fayette, Gwinnett, Heard, Henry, Rockdale, and Spalding

Mountain District
Phone: (404) 362-2671

Banks, Barrow, Butts, Clarke, Hall, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Putnam and Walton

Northeast District Office
Phone: (706) 369-6376

Jones, Lamar, Meriwether, Monroe, Pike, Troup and Upson

Middle District Office
Phone: (478) 751-6612

Table 1: Land Clearing Debris – Recycling and Disposal Options

County	Name	Address	Phone Number	Offers Mobile Grinding	Accepts Construction Lumber	Accepts Land-clearing Debris	Accepts Yard Trimmings	Commercial or Municipal Processing/Grinding/Composting Operation	Inert Landfill	C&D Landfill
Bartow	County Landfill	SR 394 Emerson	(770) 387-5030	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cherokee	Swims-Dixie Landfill	SR 92 Woodstock	(770) 924-6110	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cherokee	Gourmet Grinding	603 Sweetwater Creek Rd Canton	(770) 720-1981	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cobb	Cobb Mulch & Soil	1897 County Farm Road Marietta	(770) 720-1050	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cobb	Patterson Services	5800 River View Road Mableton	(404) 505-1449	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coweta	County Landfill	Ishman Ballard Road Newnan	(770) 253-2601	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DeKalb	Advanced Waste	Rogers Lake Road Lithonia	(404) 367-0909	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DeKalb	County Landfill	Seminole Road Ellenwood	(404) 294-2927	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DeKalb	APAC/GA	Donzi Lane Atlanta	(404) 622-3389	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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DeKalb	Day Energy Systems, Inc.	2875 Moorings Pkwy Lithonia	(770) 979-2390	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DeKalb	Phillips-Scales Road	Scales Road Lithonia	(770) 482-9600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DeKalb	BFI-East DeKalb	Scales Road Lithonia	(770) 271-3575	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Douglas	WasteNot Grinding	4411 Pool Road Winston	(404) 886-2180	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Floyd	AMR Waste Systems	4 East 3 rd Street Rome	(706) 295-3787	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forsyth	JAE Landfill	250 Nichols Road Cumming	(770) 205-6300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fulton	Chadwick Road Landfill	Chadwick Road Alpharetta	(770) 475-9868	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fulton	Hedge Hog	609 Bohannon Road Fairburn	(770) 06-7111	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gwinnett	Consolidated Resource Recovery	800 Mitchell Road Norcross	(770) 246-0044	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

County	Name	Address	Phone Number	Offers Mobile Grinding	Accepts Construction Lumber	Accepts Land-clearing Debris	Accepts Yard Trimmings	Commercial or Municipal Processing/Grinding/Composting Operation	Inert Landfill	C&D Landfill
Gwinnett	S&W	421 Thunder Road Buford	(770) 945-1771	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gwinnett	County Line Recycling	6321 Hwy. 29 Tucker	(770) 938-3994	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hall	Reliable Tire Service	Monroe Drive Gainesville		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newton	Forest Tower	Lower River Road Porterdale	(770) 786-5808	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spalding	County Landfill	Shoal Creek Road Griffin	(770) 229-6425	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓