

Contaminants in outdoor air can cause health problems in humans and harm the environment. Air toxins come from a variety of sources including automobiles and diesel trucks, gas stations, home heating systems, dry cleaners, industrial sources, and illegal burning.

[The Department of Environmental Conservation's Air Quality and Climate Division](#) implements state and federal clean air regulations, which include monitoring air quality and air pollution sources, proposing regulations to improve existing air quality, ensuring compliance with the regulations, and issuing permits to control pollution from sources of air contaminants across the state.

Open Burning Laws

In Vermont, the open burning of wood for property maintenance and clearing of property requires a permit from a local fire warden but not [a permit from the Air Quality and Climate Division](#).

The open burning of other materials, including unpainted and untreated wood waste from demolition activities at a business does require [a permit from the Air Quality and Climate Division](#). Open burning of trash, using a "burn barrel," "home-made incinerator," or simply in a pile on the ground, is illegal in Vermont.

Role of Town Health Officer

Generally, THOs will become involved with outdoor air pollution through complaints about backyard burning and outdoor wood boilers. THOs who receive complaints about illegal open burning should investigate the complaint and inform the responsible party about the law banning trash burning.

Towns can adopt an ordinance limiting illegal burning of trash, which will facilitate local enforcement of the ban through penalties. Town selectboards can assign an officer to enforce state law that bans the burning of solid waste.

Contact:

To report air pollution complaints and for guidance, fact sheets, and more information about adopting a local burning ordinance, contact the Air Quality and Climate Division at 802-828-1288. Please review the [guidance for towns and districts on backyard burning online](#).

KEY POINTS

- **In Vermont, the open burning of non-wood materials requires a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation's Air Quality and Climate Division.**
- **Towns can facilitate local enforcement of state law banning trash burning through penalties.**