






# SUMMARY OF OPEN BURNING REGULATIONS IN MCHENRY COUNTY



## Burning that is Prohibited at all Times


-  Burning of manure, garbage, litter or any materials other than landscape waste and/or brush on any property in McHenry County.
-  Burning of landscape waste within 100' of a habitable structure (i.e. residence, school, etc.).
-  Burning of landscape waste within 50' of a non-habitable structure (i.e. detached garage, shed, barn, etc.).

## RESTRICTIONS— The Public Health Ordinance allows for open burning of landscape waste if the burn area, at a minimum, can meet all of the following restrictions.


 Burn area must be located greater than 100 ft. to a habitable structure and greater than 50 ft. from a non-habitable structure.

 Only during the months of: April, May, October, November on weekend days (Saturdays & Sundays) and only between dawn and dusk.

 When winds are less than 10 mph. 

 A fire extinguisher, garden hose or water source must be available at the burn site.

Must be supervised by an individual at least 18 years of age. 

 Only landscape waste that was generated from the property where the burn area is located. No burning on public or private roads, alleys, sidewalks or easements.

## 500 FT. Exemptions

Burning of on-site generated landscape waste is permitted during any month, on any day and time when the burn area is located greater than 500' from a habitable structure and when all other applicable regulation can be met. (wind speed, supervised, extinguisher, etc.)



Recreational Camp fires are allowed but must not exceed 3'x3'x3' and exclude leaves, grass and shrubbery clippings.



Ceremonial fires (bonfires) larger than 3'x3'x3'; require an approved permit from MCDH and must exclude leaves, grass, and shrubbery clippings;



Habitat reclamation or Firefighter Training; requires a permit from Illinois EPA—Bureau of Air.

*McHenry County Public Health Ordinance applies to all areas of McHenry County. If you live in a city with more stringent restrictions, the more restrictive rules apply.*

*For the Complete Ordinance Visit our Web Page at [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info) This is a brief summary of the regulation and is not intended to represent the entire ordinance.*

## Special Circumstances



## Alternatives to Open Burning of Landscape Waste

The Department of Health encourages environmentally sound alternatives to open burning of landscape waste. The Department recommends composting, mulching and the use of native landscaping to reduce/reuse landscape waste. If landscape waste removal is necessary, residents can contact their waste hauler for curbside pickup, or work together with neighbors to rent roll-off dumpsters or contract waste haulers to organize a group pickup of leaves and landscape waste. For a fee, residents may drop off yard waste at an approved compost facility or landscape waste transfer station. Complete details about the Ordinance, suggested alternatives, exemptions and permit applications are available on our web site at [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info) or by calling 815-334-4585.



### Composting

Composting returns organic matter to the soil in a useable form. The composting process reduces material volume by 70 - 80%. Organic material in the soil improves plant growth by:

- Enhancing soil texture
- Adding nutrients back into the soil
- Increasing the soil's ability to retain water & nutrients
- Improving soil structure by adding organic matter
- Loosening heavy soils, allowing better root penetration
- Reducing the need for fertilizers



### Mulching

Use a mower to shred leaves into bits which will be washed down into the soil between the grass blades during the next rain. Mulched leaves contribute to soil health by:

- Adding nutrients & organic content
- Encouraging earthworm activity
- Preventing soil compaction
- Conserving moisture
- Reducing weeds and soil erosion



### Local Municipal Waste Haulers

Municipal solid waste haulers who are licensed in McHenry County and provide regular residential waste pickup are required to offer landscape waste collection service to residential customers. An additional fee may be charged for the service.

Many municipalities and several unincorporated areas of the county are served by municipal waste haulers who have exclusive contracts to serve specific geographic areas. Residents who are unsure if they reside in a contracted waste removal service area should contact their municipality or the McHenry County Solid Waste Manager for further information.

Residents who do not have a contracted waste hauler may contact any licensed municipal solid waste hauler and are encouraged to work collectively with neighbors and subdivision associations to identify the most economical solution for their neighborhood such as:

- working cooperatively with neighbors and subdivision associations to contract with a licensed municipal solid waste hauler to pick up bagged or loose leaves from curbsides or dumpsters, or
- coordinating roll-off containers that would be shared by multiple properties then picked up by the municipal waste hauler for appropriate disposal.

A list of McHenry County licensed municipal solid waste haulers and their services is available on the Solid Waste Program webpage at [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info).

### Landscaping Service Companies



Landscaping service companies may remove landscape waste produced from landscape maintenance services and also offer products such as wood chips, wood mulch or firewood for sale to customers.



### Native Landscaping

Selecting plants that are native to our area will provide the following benefits:

- Reduce pesticide use
- Reduce use of power equipment
- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Less upkeep and watering
- Benefit local wildlife
- Reduce yard work



### Yard Waste Recycling Facilities

Homeowners also have the option of dropping off their yard waste at an approved compost facility or landscape waste transfer station for a fee. Finished compost is available for purchase.

- **Thelen Sand and Gravel Compost Facility or Petersen Pit Landscape Waste Transfer Facility**  
815-675-6613  
[www.thelensg.com](http://www.thelensg.com)
- **Garden Prairie Organics**  
815-597-1318  
[www.gpocompost.com](http://www.gpocompost.com)