

NYS DEC Open Burn Ban

As of October 14, 2009, it is illegal to burn household trash and yard waste. However, there are alternatives and some exceptions.

What is the Open Burn Ban?

Open burning of household trash and yard waste releases dangerous chemical compounds including arsenic, carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, lead, and other toxins and carcinogens. Poor air quality contributes to serious acute and chronic health conditions, including childhood asthma and lung cancer. Open burning is the leading cause of wildfires in New York.



Leaves are included in materials that cannot be burned. No burning of home building materials (except untreated lumber). There are no open fires allowed between March 16th and May 14th due to threat of wildfires.

Are There Exceptions?

Exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- Small cooking and campfires (untreated wood only and no larger than 3' tall and 4' wide).
- Ceremonial bonfires.
- Onsite burning of agricultural waste (organic in origin) generated on farms larger than 5 acres.
- In towns with less than 20,000 residents, burning of downed limbs and branches with leaves attached is allowed but subject to the above date restrictions.



How Can Yard Waste Transport Invasive Species?

Invasive species can easily be spread through transporting yard waste and woody debris. Consider composting at home to limit the spread of invasive species such as those listed below. If moving yard waste to a municipal compost site, minimize risk by not transporting yard waste from areas which may have the following plants/trees:

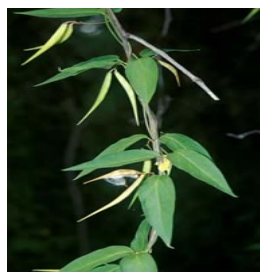
Japanese Knotweed: Looks like "bamboo", small seeds are easily transported in fall by wind and attachment, the plant can also be spread by transporting any part of the root. Control is very difficult due to propagation from root rhizomes.



Emerald Ash Borer: Small insect threatening New York State ash stands, spread through transport of infected wood and can also fly.



Pale Swallow-Wort: Fast growing vine like plant that is easily spread through transport of yard waste and seeds (also wind spread).



List of helpful websites related to open burning and alternatives

NYS DEC Page on Open Burning
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html>
Dangers of Open Burning
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/32064.html>
Recycling in Cortland County
<http://www.cortland-co.org/sw/recycling.htm>
NYS DEC Invasive Species Page
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>
Composting at Home
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8799.html>
Cortland County SWCD
<http://www.cortlandswcd.org>

Recycling is offered to Cortland County resident through the County's Recycling and Solid Waste Department. Some items require a permit or fee for disposal. The list below defines what is trash and what could be recycled, reused, or composted (*information may be subject to change*).

Items that can be recycled by Cortland County (*For a complete list, contact the Cortland County Recycling Center at 607-756-8077*):

PERMITS AND FEES MAY BE APPLICABLE

- Dry paper, junk mail, lightweight cardboard (cereal boxes)
- Plastics (food containers w/ symbols 1-7, no 5-gallon pails, toys or rigid plastics)
- Metal food/beverage cans and lids, foil wrap, and aerosol cans (no car parts/chemical containers)
- Glass (no auto glass, mirrors, or windows)
- Electronics (computers, TV's, stereos)
- Tires and residential metal appliances (to County Landfill: permits and fees may be applicable—must present statement of purging from certified remover if applicable)



Items that can be recycled individually:

- Plastic shopping bags (at many local stores)
- Used motor oil/car batteries/ rechargeable batteries (at any business selling that specific item)
- Scrap metal (examples: swing sets and car parts by local scrap metal recyclers/haulers)
- Medications, pesticides, household hazardous waste (at local collection days, see Cortland County Recycling/Solid Waste webpage for dates or call 607-756-8077 for details)



Items that can be reused/donated:

- Furniture, clothing, silverware/dishware/cookware, toys, etc. (at local thrift stores/donation centers)

Items that can be composted:

- Used paper plates/cups, pizza boxes, wet and dry paper/cardboard
- Organic material: ex. lawn clippings, food scraps, wood chips

Items considered trash (currently):

- Wax coated cardboard, frozen food/microwave containers, broken glass, mirrors, styrofoam, snack bags, buckets, damaged household items, plastic silverware/ box liners (cereal box liners), and empty pesticide/gasoline containers



If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District at (607)756-5991 or the NYS DEC Region 7 Sub-Office in Cortland at (607)753-3095 x261.



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