

HERE IS HOW TO OBTAIN A BURN PERMIT FROM THE DNR

Here's a friendly reminder from Torch Lake Township:

Now that summer is almost here, township residents are raking leaves and cleaning up yard and garden wastes that accumulated since last fall. Property owners who plan to burn leaves and other yard debris are reminded that, prior to doing so, they must first obtain a burning permit from the Department of Natural Resources.

For the record, burning permits are required whenever open fires exist, unless the fire is a campfire, is on snow-covered ground or has an agricultural exemption.

Homeowners and farmers in northern Lower Michigan are now able to obtain a burning permit on-line from the Department of Natural Resources on the Internet by going to www.michigandnr.com/burnpermits.

Permit seekers will be advised whether or not conditions are too dry or windy to burn. If so, a permit will not be issued that day. Michigan fire laws do allow burning of natural vegetation in a burn pile, but only if a permit has been issued. However, construction materials and waste, old furniture and other non-vegetative materials may not be legally burned.

Homeowners and farmers should also be aware that a person who sets a fire that burns out of control will be liable for all damages the fire causes, even if a permit was issued. In cases of negligence, fines may also be levied. So, please plan ahead, be cautious and make sure that any fire you start is completely burned out before you leave it.

Also, a request . . . if and when you burn your yard debris, please be considerate of your neighbors. Check wind direction and the amount of smoke that may be drifting their way. Breathing disorders such as asthma and emphysema are not uncommon and breathing difficulties can be triggered by the smoke that drifts into their houses from your fire. So, please be a considerate neighbor.

Additional information about burning permits and the State's fire laws can be obtained by calling the DNR at (866) 922-2876.

Torch Lake Township's firefighters and I encourage you to practice "safety first" when it comes to fires. And please remember, never leave a fire unattended.

Thank you. Have a great summer!