



NEWS

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Open Burning Season Begins for Marsh Management

The open burning season for fires set to improve wildlife habitat began Saturday, February 1, 2003, according to William C. Norton, Executive Officer for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. (Air District)

The marsh management open burning season, which runs through March 31, 2003, applies to fires for the purpose of improvement of marshland for wildlife habitat. All marsh management fires must be deemed necessary by the CA Department of Fish and Game, no fire is allowed on a given piece of land more than once in any 2-year period, and no more than 100 acres of any property may be burned in a single day. Marsh management fires also require an Air District-approved Smoke Management Plan, as well as a daily acreage burning allocation from the Air District. These fires are not allowed before 10:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m., nor can any additional material be added to existing fires after 3:00 p.m. The next marsh management burn period runs September 1 - October 15, 2003.

Open burning has been regulated in the Bay Area since 1957 because of its considerable contribution to air pollution. While backyard burning of leaves, trash, and grass cuttings or landscape prunings has been prohibited in the Bay Area since 1970, certain fires for agricultural purposes, flood control, fire training and the prevention of fire hazards are allowed according to District regulations for specified periods throughout the year.

Although certain fires are allowed during the appropriate burn season, each day of the year is designated as either a BURN or a NO BURN day. Days when air pollution caused by open burning would be minimized by favorable weather conditions are designated as BURN days.

Allowed fires can only take place on a BURN day. This means that even though a burn season may be in effect, the party seeking open burn authorization must check with the Air District for daily burn status prior to burning. BURN/NO BURN days are forecasted by 3 p.m. on the District's toll-free number **1-800-HELP-AIR** for the following day.

Open burning seasons apply to the entire Bay Area, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, southwestern Solano and southern Sonoma counties. Residents may call the District's Public Information Office at (415) 749-4900 for more information.

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