

# PROP FACT *Sheet*

## Open Burning

Open burning is a controversial topic in many communities across the state. Those who favor burning feel that it is their right to place a burn barrel in their backyard and burn their trash. Those opposed to burning cite environmental concerns, such as pollution, and health concerns, such as asthma and other respiratory problems, as reasons burning should be banned in a community.

Open burning is also a detriment in the competitive grant process. Municipalities that permit the burning of leaves and recyclables may now risk the loss of potential grant money from the Department of Environmental Protection.

### The Facts:



An EPA Study found that a single household burn barrel may release as many toxic chemicals as a large municipal incinerator.



Products and packages containing vinyl are extremely dangerous when burned. They produce hydrogen chloride gas that combines with water to form hydrochloric acid in human lungs. Burning also produces toxic dioxin chemicals.



Children are particularly susceptible to the toxins released by burn barrels. They absorb up to six times the amount of by-products that adults absorb from the same air.



Burning releases at least seven known cancer-causing agents into the air, including one believed to be a major factor in lung cancer.



Open burning has been linked to a host of health problems, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments.

### What's Legal?

It is up to each individual municipality to ban burning or set restrictive burning ordinances. No municipality may pass an ordinance which supercedes the state's burning requirements. Under state law, it is illegal to burn both construction and demolition waste and commercial waste. If your ordinance permits the burning of commercial waste, it is in violation of state law. More details on legal requirements and other open burning issues can be found on PROP's Open Burning web page - [www.proprecycles.org/Open%20Burning%20Information.html](http://www.proprecycles.org/Open%20Burning%20Information.html).

*This fact sheet was developed by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, P. O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA, 16617. Model burning ordinances are also available from PROP. Material was gathered from Penn State University Cooperative Extension fact sheets, the Lawrence County Recycling Department and the Cambria County Solid Waste Authority. Funding for this fact sheet was provided by DCNR's Forest Lands Beautification Program. We do our part to close the recycling loop and print all our publications on recycled paper.*