



Calgary Fire Department

# BACKYARD FIRE SAFETY



When used safely and properly, fire pits can provide many seasons of enjoyment. The Fire on Premises section of the Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004 outlines the requirements for the construction and use of fire pits within the city to help protect the safety of citizens.

## Fire pit definitions

The bylaw applies to various types of outdoor burning, including burning in fire pits, fire places and portable fire receptacles.

The term “fire pit” refers to a permanently affixed outdoor receptacle. A “fire place” includes enclosed and permanently affixed outdoor fire receptacles that incorporate a permanently affixed chimney or flue and are constructed of brick, rock or other masonry. “Portable fire receptacles” are outdoor fire receptacles which are not permanently affixed.

## Fire pit standards

To protect the safety of citizens, the Fire on Premises section of the Community Standards Bylaw 5M2004 outlines requirements for the construction and use of outdoor fire pits.

These standards include:

- Owners may not burn treated or painted lumber, lumber containing glue or resin, wet or unseasoned wood, yard waste, garbage, rubber, plastic or any animal parts.

- The distance of fire pits from a building, structure or any combustible material is at least two metres. This distance is required to reduce the risk of a fire spreading.
- The size of a fire pit has been limited to one metre at its widest point, and the height of the flames cannot exceed one metre.
- Owners must have a means of extinguishing the fire, and all fires must be supervised at all times.
- Fire pits cannot be used between 1 a.m. and 10 a.m.
- Owners may be fined if they are found to be burning prohibited materials, allowing a fire to continue after 1 a.m., burning a fire during a fire ban or failing to comply with directions during a fire ban.
- Fires may be burned in portable fire receptacles on a wooden deck as long as non-combustible material such as brick or stone is placed between the portable and deck. The portable must also be situated at least two metres from any combustible materials.



## Fire pit common questions

**Will the Fire Department be checking fire pits to ensure they meet the bylaw standards?**

When the Fire Department responds to a fire pit complaint, they will determine if there is a public safety concern and, if so, will extinguish the fire.

While attending to a complaint, if the Fire Department suspects the fire pit is in contravention of bylaw standards, The City of Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services will be informed and a bylaw officer may be dispatched to examine the fire pit.

**What happens if a fire pit is in contravention to the standards outlined in the bylaw?**

The Fire Department will inform The City of Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services, who may issue a remedial order requiring the owner to make the necessary modifications so the fire pit will be in compliance with the bylaw. Applicable penalties may be imposed.

## Are the standards different for portable and permanent fire pits?

There's a slight difference. Both permanent fire pits and portable fire receptacles must be two metres away from a building or structure. However, a portable fire pit may be located on a deck as long as it's placed on non-combustible material and is situated at least two metres from a structure. All other standards are the same for both portable and permanent fire pits.

### Tips for fire pit use

- Smoke from fire pits can cause adverse health effects in some people. Be aware of neighbours who may be negatively impacted by exposure to smoke from outdoor fire pits.
- Before using your fire pit, familiarize yourself with optimal weather conditions and take precautions to prevent smoke from disturbing your neighbours.
- High wind speeds may pose a fire hazard.
- Low wind speeds may contribute to poor air quality and reduce smoke dissipation.
- Placing a metal grill/screen on the top of the fire pit reduces the size of the flame and helps prevent sparks and embers from escaping and igniting nearby materials.

## FIRE PIT FINES

Offence	Penalty	Offence	Penalty
Fire pits must be constructed of non-combustible material.	\$500	The open flame area cannot exceed one metre at its widest point.	\$500
Fires may be burned in portable fire receptacles on a wooden deck as long as a non-combustible material such as brick or stone is placed between the pit and the deck.	\$500	Owners must have a way to extinguish the fire.	\$500
Treated or painted lumber, wet or unseasoned wood, lumber containing glue or resin, yard waste, garbage, rubber, plastic or any animal parts cannot be burned in a fire pit.	\$500	All fires must be supervised at all times.	\$500
A fire pit must be situated at least two metres from a building, structure or any combustible material and cannot be located under any trees or branches.	\$500	Fires are not allowed to burn on a premises between 1 a.m. and 10 a.m.	\$500
		Owners may not build, ignite or allow any kind of fire during a fire ban.	\$1,000
		Owners may be subject to an additional fine if they fail to extinguish a fire upon official request during a fire ban.	\$5,000



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information related to fire pits, please call 3-1-1.

To see a complete copy of the Fire on Premises section of the Community Services Bylaw 5M2004 and all related standards and requirements, visit [calgary.ca/bylaws](http://calgary.ca/bylaws).

For more fire safety information, please visit [calgary.ca/fire](http://calgary.ca/fire)

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