

Burning of garden refuse in backyards to remove fuel loads and unwanted vegetation is a significant contributor to smoke haze and nuisance within the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale. Smoke and other forms of air pollution can adversely affect the health of people with respiratory conditions. Smoke also reduces amenity for other residents by soiling washing and placing soot and ash on dwellings. Additionally, burning near major roadways can cause a hazard to motorists.

Although some people associate smoke with living in rural areas, it is important that the impacts of garden refuse burning are taken into consideration before lighting up.

Do you need to burn?

Residents should consider alternative means to get rid of garden refuse other than burning. These methods may include:

- Mulching green waste and re-using it on your garden
- Taking green waste to a local waste facility
- Stockpiling vegetation for curb-side green waste collection
- Placing garden waste in household waste bins

Burning for the purpose of fuel reduction is allowed during specific times of the year and under specific conditions in the Shire's annual Fire Hazard Reduction Notice and the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. Be sure to check the Shire's website for up to date information on burning times and fuel hazard reduction.

Registering your burn

On the day of the burn and prior to ignition register your burn with the DFES Communications Centre on 08 9395 9209.

This simple task ensures that your local Volunteer Bushfire Brigades are not unnecessarily turned out to attend your fire.

At the completion of the burn when fully extinguished, please notify DFES Communications Centre on 08 9395 9209.

In the unfortunate event that your fire gets out of control call 000 immediately to request assistance.

Burning under the appropriate conditions

Weather

Due to atmospheric conditions and inversion layers, smoke can be trapped at a lower level, taking a much longer time to disperse.

Always check local weather conditions and for haze alerts issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au).

If smoke from other fires is visible as a flat and distinct low level layer then any smoke you produce is also likely to be trapped and cause a possible nuisance.

Light winds can aid in dispersing smoke but take care that the direction of the wind does not blow the smoke across roads or highways causing a hazard to motorists. Also make sure that forecast winds won't be too strong and make the fire difficult to contain.



Notify your neighbours

If you intend to burn, always give your neighbours plenty of notice. This will give them an opportunity to manage any respiratory condition, take washing off the line or close windows.

Be prepared to be flexible, and if a neighbour requests you move your burn to another day consider re-scheduling.

Condition of the garden refuse

Material that is green or wet will create a lot of smoke and will not burn efficiently. Only burn dry, dead material to minimise smoke.

Consider covering stockpiled material with a tarpaulin to prevent it getting wet. Piles of vegetation may appear dry on the surface but may still be wet underneath.

Size of burn

It is better to have a smaller pile and gradually add material. Be aware that adding wet or excess fuel will smother the fire and result in more smoke being generated.

Make sure you are burning manageable piles and consider waiting a few days between burning piles to allow neighbours some respite.

Making the area safe

Make sure all piles or burns are fully extinguished, before you leave them. Someone capable should remain with the fire preferably with a charged hose or extinguisher. It is important that piles are not left smouldering.

Further information

Additional information on conducting garden refuse burning safely is contained in a separate information note. Check the Shire's website for up to date information on burning times and what you are allowed to burn.

For general advice in relation to smoke nuisance, incinerators and other smoke issues see the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's **BurnWise website** or contact the Shire's Environmental Health team.

