

Natural Disaster Preparedness Fact Sheet for Municipalities regarding the Appointment of a Local Open Burning Official and Brush Management Options

Pre-Disaster Planning:

➤ Chief Executive Officers to Appoint Local Open Burning Officials

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) recognizes that there may be an increased need for the open burning of brush on private property resulting from hurricanes and other natural disasters. While DEEP does not promote open burning as a brush management practice, the purpose of this fact sheet is to encourage municipalities to nominate a local Open Burning Official who can complete the [online training](#) and become certified by DEEP. This fact sheet provides guidance for the open burning of brush when all other preferable management options are exhausted.

The following information is being shared in the interest of protecting air quality as intended by Section 22a-174(f) of the Connecticut General Statutes:

- The Chief Executive Officer of a local municipality has the authority to nominate a local Open Burning Official; and
- The local Open Burning Official must be certified by DEEP prior to serving in this capacity, and must understand and enforce the requirements of Section 22a-174(f) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

DEEP strongly recommends that each municipality nominate an Open Burning Official to be trained and certified prior to a natural disaster. This will enable municipalities to address residential open burning issues in their jurisdiction according to recommended practices, should a natural disaster occur resulting in the generation of a significant amount of brush debris. DEEP is ready to work with Chief Executive Officers to train and certify the nominated local Open Burning Official.

Actions required:

If your municipality **ALREADY** has a certified local Open Burning Official, please note that all current Open Burning Official certifications will expire on January 31, 2021. In order to be re-certified, the individual must be re-nominated by his/her Chief Executive Officer, complete the [online training](#) and submit the required documentation to DEEP. To begin the re-nomination process, the Chief Executive Officer must request an Open Burning Official Nomination Affidavit from DEEP by sending an email to deep.ctopenburning@ct.gov.

If your municipality **NEEDS** a certified local Open Burning Official, please have the Chief Executive Officer request an Open Burning Official Nomination Affidavit from DEEP by sending an email to deep.ctopenburning@ct.gov to begin the process.

Questions regarding the Open Burning program, training, or certification processes can be sent to Kathleen Rankin at kathleen.rankin@ct.gov

Disaster Recovery Phase:

➤ Brush Management – Preferable Options

The [State of Connecticut's Disaster Debris Management Plan](#) provides guidance as to the proper management of various debris types, including vegetative debris. Planned implementation will be based on recycling and material separation at the point of generation to the extent possible. In the event of a natural disaster, municipalities should dispose of as much brush as possible through composting, recycling, and markets for wood chips. Many municipalities have chippers and/or tub grinders that can be utilized. If not, there are commercial sources that can provide chipping and grinding services. Another option would be the rental of this type of equipment. [The Department of Administrative Services \(DAS\) State Contracting Portal](#) has contract awards that can be utilized by all municipalities for the rental of tree trimming, removal, and disposal equipment.

If all other preferable brush management options are exhausted and burning brush is being considered, please review the material below:

1. Brush includes storm-generated green waste such as shrubs, vegetation, or prunings, the diameter of which is not greater than three inches at the widest point.
2. Brush needs to be separated from other materials prior to approval for open burning.
3. The open burning of brush is allowed on **residential property** provided that a burning permit is obtained from the DEEP-certified local Open Burning Official of the municipality in which the property is located.
4. Forms for permitted burns are available to the local Open Burning Official from DEEP by contacting Kathleen Rankin as noted above.
5. Prior to burning, the predicted [Air Quality Index](#) (AQI) must be checked. If **any town** listed in the table, labeled "Predicted Daily AQI Maximums", has a forecasted value of **75 or greater** (for fine particulates and ozone), open burning **cannot** take place anywhere in the state.
6. In addition to checking the AQI prior to conducting the burn, the [Forest Fire Danger Index](#) must be checked as well. If the Forest Fire Danger Index is **high, very high or extreme**, open burning **cannot** take place.
7. If there are any signs of Asian Longhorned Beetle or Emerald Ash Borer infestation, please check the [DEEP Forestry Webpage](#) for more information.
8. Verify that there are no conditions which will jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of the public or the environment at or near the proposed site where the open burning will occur.
9. Failure to comply with Section 22a-174(f) of the Connecticut General Statutes may result in enforcement action by the DEEP. For more information please see DEEP's [Open Burning Enforcement Fact Sheet](#).

Other open burning, beyond the local Open Burning Official's jurisdiction:

The open burning of brush at a municipal landfill, transfer station or recycling center licensed by the CT DEEP's Materials Management & Compliance Assurance Bureau may be allowed, provided a permit application is submitted to the DEEP by the **Fire Marshal** of the municipality where the facility is located. All other open burning of brush may be authorized by the **Commissioner** of the DEEP or through an emergency authorization under Section 22a-6k of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The time to plan is NOW

Please visit our [Open Burning Webpage](#) for answers to questions or additional information relating to open burning. Questions can be directed to Kathleen Rankin at (860) 424-3473 or via e-mail at kathleen.rankin@ct.gov.