

CITY OF



San Rafael

FIRE DEPARTMENT – FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

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Fire Prevention Standard #11-0701
OUTDOOR FIRES and OPEN BURNING

Introduction:

The 2010 California Fire Code (CFC) and the San Rafael Municipal Code (SRMC) have specific rules for the safe operations and use of open burning, bonfires, recreational fires, portable outdoor fireplaces, open flames, cooking devices and other sources of ignition. Some activities, operations and use require a Fire Permit, this standard focuses on activities that do not require a Fire Permit, but are regulated by the CFC and must be performed with caution not to create a fire hazard. The San Rafael Fire Department (SRFD) does not allow outdoor fires for the burning of yard waste, rubbish, construction debris, brush, etc.

Codes and Standards:

This standard is adopted in accordance with the CFC as amended by SRMC Title 4, Chapter 4.08, Section 4.08.120. Outdoor fires and open burning is regulated the CFC Chapter 3 General Precautions Against Fire and this standard.

Fire Permits:

Open burning, bonfires, and recreational fires are strictly prohibited within the jurisdiction without a Fire Permit issued by SRFD.

Campfires are strictly prohibited within the jurisdiction; there are no approved campgrounds located within the City of San Rafael, therefore no Fire Permit will be issued for a campfire.

A Fire Permit issued by SRFD is required prior to kindling a fire, or engaging in the activity, operation or use regarding outdoor fire or open burning, which is not specifically included in this standard.

Portable Outdoor Fireplaces:

Portable outdoor fireplaces are available through many local stores. A portable outdoor fireplace may be used within the jurisdiction of SRFD without a Fire Permit; the fireplace must be used in accordance with all of the manufacturer's safety requirements found in the user's manual, and the following conditions:

1. The fireplace must be a device that includes a bowl or chamber for holding the wood, a method of containing embers and sparks, and supports to ensure clearances to combustibles. The fireplace must have a user manual or a set of user instructions.
2. Only dry firewood is permitted. If anything other than dry firewood is used, SRFD may respond and extinguish the fire and a citation may be issued.
3. The fireplace cannot be used within 15 feet of a structure, combustible materials, or the lot line.
4. The fireplace cannot be used on a wood deck, porch, or combustible patio.
5. A minimum 4-A rated fire extinguisher, garden hose, or other approved method of first-aid fire control must be readily available during the use of the fireplace.
6. The fireplace must be supervised AT ALL TIMES by a responsible adult. The fire must be completely extinguished before the fireplace is unsupervised by the responsible adult.
7. All fireplaces must have spark arrestor screens in place during use.
8. Clay fireplaces (Chimineas) must have a spark arrester on the flue and a spark screen to cover the opening.
9. Do not operate the fireplace in unsafe windy conditions where sparks or embers may leave the assembly.
10. Do not store/use gasoline or other flammable liquids in the vicinity of the fireplace.

LP-Gas Assisted Ignition Fireplaces:

LP-gas assisted ignition fireplaces must meet all of the requirements listed above for a portable outdoor fireplace, in addition to the following:

1. Once the firewood is burning, immediately turn the regulator knob to "OFF" and disconnect the LP-gas container and hose assembly.
2. Never leave the hose assembly connected when firewood is burning in the fireplace.
3. Follow the instructions in the user manual for the proper use of the product.

Charcoal Burners, LP-Gas Grills and Other Open-Flame Cooking Devices (BBQ): *be sure to read the user's manual!* A BBQ may be used within the jurisdiction of SRFD without a Fire Permit; the BBQ must be used in accordance with all of the manufacturer's safety requirements found in the user's manual, and the following conditions:

1. BBQ shall not be used on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction. (Exception: one- and two-dwelling unit buildings).

2. Ensure the coals are completely cooled down with water and dispose all ashes in a non-combustible container.
3. LP-gas burners having an LP-gas container with a water capacity greater than 2.5 pounds shall not be used or located on combustible balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction. (Exception: one- and two-dwelling unit buildings).

Fine Particulate Advisories:

On high pollution days; the Air District will issue a *Spare the Air Alert* and prohibit the burning of solid fuel. Contact the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for fine particulate matter forecast and for air quality or smoke complaints call 1-800-334-6367. (Additional information is available at [http://www.baaqmd.gov/.](http://www.baaqmd.gov/))

Weather Conditions:

Kindling an outdoor fire is prohibited in extreme fire weather when Marin County has declared a Red Flag Day. It is important to consider weather conditions before using an outdoor fireplace or BBQ. Wind direction, wind speed, humidity, and barometric pressure all affect the danger of fire.

Fire Department Response to Complaints:

If the SRFD receives a complaint regarding fire, we will respond and can, at the discretion of the Fire Officer, extinguish the fire for any violation of the above conditions, or if the fire is creating a hazard. A \$500.00 citation may be issued for any violation of the SRMC. Public complaints about a fire hazard should be directed to the Marin County Communications Center at (415) 453-1515. In case of a fire emergency dial 911 immediately.

Deliberate or Negligent Burning:

It shall be unlawful to deliberately or through negligence set fire to or cause the burning of combustible material in such a manner as to endanger the safety of persons or property.