

Town of Avon Massachusetts



At single family dwellings, there are no special permits required in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the use of outdoor fire pits, cooking, or recreational fires. **THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS OPEN BURNING** There are, however, several requirements based on Department of Environmental Protection regulations (D.E.P.), the Massachusetts State Fire Laws & Codes (MGL Chapter 148 & 527 CMR), and the 2009 International Fire Code (IFC):

ALL FIRES MUST BE PRIMARILY USED FOR WARMTH, AMBIANCE, AND/OR COOKING. THESE FIRES ARE NOT INTENDED TO BURN YARD WASTE. SEE OPEN BURNING, ABOVE.

1. The fire must be small and manageable, no greater than 3 feet in diameter. By definition, a fire larger than 3 feet in diameter is no longer considered a cooking or recreational fire. (IFC)
2. All fires must be constantly attended. (IFC)
3. It is required to keep a fire extinguisher, garden hose, or water bucket available for quick extinguishment if necessary. (IFC)
4. Fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible materials. (IFC)
5. The fire pit should be placed on a flat, noncombustible surface. An area of 25 feet should be cleared around the fire pit in all directions, and clear of all dry vegetation and combustibles. Make sure the fire pit is placed away from other materials that could burn or catch fire, both overhead and to the sides such as building components, tree limbs, sheds, awnings, etc. (IFC)
6. Fire pits and recreational fires ARE NOT INCINERATORS. The burning of trash, rubbish, painted or stained wood, treated wood and construction debris is prohibited by D.E.P.
7. Do not cause a nuisance or health hazard to your neighbors. Never use wet or damp wood. This creates needless, irritating smoke. Always use dry seasoned wood, charcoal, or specialist fuel (e.g. wood burning briquettes). If the Avon Fire Department receives complaints from neighbors that the smoke or smell is bothersome, we will investigate, and if deemed necessary, you may be instructed to extinguish the fire. (MGL Chapter 148)
8. Never use an accelerant to light any fire. There have been many cases of people getting burned while trying to light a fire with a "small amount" of gasoline.

If you have any further questions related to the use of fire pits and recreational fires, please call or email the Avon Fire Department 508-583-5361.