

## **Bonfire Code of Conduct**

Bonfires can be very irritating and upsetting to neighbours. The most usual problem is smoke, particularly when neighbours are using their gardens, have washing out or windows open. Annoyance can also be caused by charred debris, even from a bonfire, which is burning with relatively little smoke. Bonfires burning close to garden fences or hedges can cause concern about the spread of fire to neighbouring property.

You can reduce the risk of upsetting or causing concerns to your neighbour by following the advice below. It is not possible for this list to cover every eventuality and it is for guidance only.

Firstly, it is rarely (if ever) essential to have a bonfire. There are other ways to dispose of garden waste, which are "friendlier" for the environment and your neighbours.

If you still wish to light a bonfire, please follow the Council's guidelines, which are:

- Do not light a bonfire before 8 pm and extinguish it by 10pm
- Do not light a bonfire if a neighbour is using or is likely to use the garden
- Do not light a bonfire if there is washing on a neighbours' line
- Do not light a bonfire if neighbours' windows are left open
- Do not light a bonfire if the weather is wet, windy or misty.
- Do not burn wet material
- Do not leave a fire smoldering
- Do not burn household waste, plastics, rubber or any other material, which could cause dark smoke or harmful combustion products
- Do not allow smoke to blow across a road
- Do not light bonfires on a regular basis

Remember to build it as far away from neighbours' properties as possible, away from fences, hedges or other combustible materials which might catch fire accidentally.

Ensure you attend the fires at all times and have plenty of water ready.

Bonfires can cause a statutory nuisance, so continually monitor whether the fire might cause annoyance and extinguish it if there is potential for nuisance.

If, in spite of following this advice, your bonfire still causes annoyance to a neighbour, please consider any representations they make to you. Your neighbour could ask this department to intervene, or could take legal action of their own.

While a single event is unlikely to meet the criteria of a statutory nuisance, householders having multiple regular bonfires which are likely to cause such a nuisance will be investigated. This could result in a fine of up to £5,000.