

Even if you're burning paper, you're making poison.



Burning anything — including packaging, plastic, wood, even newspapers and junk mail in barrels, stoves, fireplaces, open pits or other devices with no pollution controls — releases a variety of pollutants including dioxins. These toxic chemicals eventually settle in our neighborhoods, our water and our soils. As a result, these substances build up in our environment and accumulate in the foods we eat. These toxins poison our bodies causing serious health concerns for our children and ourselves. Help keep toxins out of our environment. Don't burn your garbage- dispose of it safely!

It's better not to burn

There are alternatives to burning. Recycle your newsprint, plastics, glass, office paper and pasteboard. Compost organic waste such as vegetable scraps, leaves and grass clippings and add the compost to your lawn or garden. Look for products with less packaging and buy only what you need. Call your local garbage hauler for service options or bring your waste to your local transfer station. Proper waste disposal through recycling or landfilling is always preferable to burning. Help keep toxins out of our environment and out of our food.



Bernie the Burn Barrel, reformed burner

Bernie the Burn Barrel recommends:

- Buy smart. Look for products with less packaging. Only buy the amount you need.
- Compost organic waste such as vegetable scraps, leaves and grass clippings. Add the compost to your lawn or garden.
- Educate your family and neighbors about the dangers of burn barrels.
- Reduce the amount you throw away. Reuse and recycle.
- Shred your personal papers instead of burning them.
- Call your local garbage hauler for service options or bring your waste to your local transfer station.

Some Burning Facts

- The trash you burn in your backyard barrel gives off toxic chemicals into our air, water and soil. These toxins end up in the food we eat and the water we drink.
- Even burning paper in this manner can release toxic chemicals.
- Health problems that may result from the pollutants released by burn barrels include eye and throat irritation, respiratory problems and potentially an increased risk of cancer.
- Burn barrels and debris burning cause 40% of all wildfires.
- Many state and local laws prohibit garbage burning.

This fact sheet was reproduced with permission and printed with funds provided through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. No endorsement of this flyer by the USEPA is either implied or expressed.

Bernie the Burn Barrel and this fact sheet developed by the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District with support from the EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office.

ND Solid Waste & Recycling Assoc.
www.ndswra.org