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DNR Offers New Web Site, Toll-Free Number For Public to Obtain Burn Permits

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Michigan citizens who live north of a line from Oceana to Bay counties (excluding Isabella County) can now access burn permits online for rakings and vegetation burning while doing spring or fall cleanup work on their property. The Department of Natural Resources recently received a federal grant to make burn permits more easily obtainable for property owners in the northern Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula.

By going to www.michigan.gov/burnpermit, citizens can obtain a burn permit online. Citizens also can call a toll-free number at 866-922-2876 to obtain a burn permit as well. Persons who call the toll-free line will have their permit recorded and they will get a confirmation number. A burn permit, which is free, is required any time a property owner burns yard debris, such as leaves, tree limbs, brush or grass. Burning is not allowed within 1,400 feet of a city or village, according to Department of Environmental Quality air quality regulations.

"We strongly urge property owners to obtain a burn permit before they plan on burning any brush, tree limbs or leaves this spring," said Paul Kollmeyer, DNR fire prevention specialist. "The permits are required, and are free of charge. And through this project, residents will no longer have to visit a DNR office to obtain one."

Items that property owners are allowed to burn include tree limbs, brush, stumps, leaves, evergreen needles and grass. Items you are not allowed to burn because of air quality laws include automobile parts, demolition debris and construction debris.

Kollmeyer also warned citizens that spring is wildfire season in Michigan, and that the DNR predicts an active wildfire season.

Composting yard waste is a safer alternative to burning. Information about composting can be found on the burn permit Web page as well. Compost can be used as a nutrient-rich additive to gardens.

If you are going to burn yard waste, the DNR offers the following safety tips to prevent a wildfire:

- Never leave an outdoor campfire or debris fire unattended, even for a moment;
- Have water available in case your fire begins to escape. If your fire does escape, call for help immediately;
- Always be sure your debris fire and/or campfire is completely extinguished before leaving it unattended. Improperly extinguished fires are one of the leading causes of wildfires. They also are a major cause of burns among children. Hundreds of children are burned each year when they fall into or walk

- over an improperly extinguished fire;
- Drown your fire with plenty of water. Wet everything thoroughly, especially the undersides of unburned pieces. Stir the ashes to find any hot spots - you will see and hear steam escape when you find one. Wet everything again with more water;
 - Do not simply bury your fire with soil. In most cases, this will not extinguish the fire.

The DNR is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural resources for current and future generations.

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