OPEN BURNING QUIZ

Take the quiz - Which of these household materials can be legally burned in a burn barrel or an open fire on the same property where generated? Check (✓) those items that are legal to burn under statewide laws. (Municipal ordinances may be more prohibitive.) Answers on reverse side.

☐ Plastic Milk Jug  ☐ Corrugated Cardboard  ☐ Urethane Foam Pad
☐ Leaves (dry)  ☐ Asphalt Sealant  ☐ Plastic Soda Bottles
☐ Treated Lumber  ☐ Plastic Food Wrap  ☐ Magazines / Catalogues
☐ Newspaper  ☐ Plywood  ☐ Waste Mail
☐ Insulated Electrical Wire  ☐ Plastic Pipe  ☐ OSB / Composite Board
☐ Rubber Hose  ☐ Food Waste / Garbage  ☐ Plastic Weed Barrier
☐ Tire  ☐ Wooden Furniture  ☐ Water Softener Salt Bag
☐ Tree Branches  ☐ Plastic Siding  ☐ Paper Plates / Cups
☐ Plastic Garbage Bags  ☐ Aluminum Beer Cans  ☐ Napkins / Paper Towels
☐ Waste Oil  ☐ Pine Needles  ☐ Paper Grocery Bags
☐ Asphalt Shingles  ☐ Nylon Carpet  ☐ Plastic Vapor Barrier
☐ Painted Siding  ☐ Polystyrene Plates  ☐ Plastic Toys
☐ Clean Dry Firewood  ☐ Tar Paper  ☐ Old Building
☐ Nylon Upholstery Fabric  ☐ Polystyrene Foam Packaging  ☐ Untreated Unpainted Lumber

Remember:
• All materials emit pollutants when burned. Generally, the materials that cause the most toxic emissions are those that are prohibited from burning under state law. Try to avoid burning any waste material.
• If prohibited and allowed materials are mixed, they cannot be burned. Any prohibited materials must be removed before the allowed materials are burned.
• Check local ordinances! A local municipality may ban the burning of any material even if statewide regulations allow it.
• Check for burning permits. Even if the material is legal to burn, the DNR or the local municipality often requires a burning permit. During periods of high fire hazard, burning may be prohibited.
• Consider other alternatives. Even if the material is legal to burn, more environmentally sound alternatives are available.
• This quiz only applies to small quantities of household waste being burned on the same property where generated. The regulations do not allow businesses to burn the same materials that a household may. If in question, consult the regulations.

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OPEN BURNING QUIZ ANSWERS

State law does not prohibit burning small dry quantities of the household materials with a √ mark, if they are burned on the same property where generated. Local ordinances may be more restrictive; check with your local municipality before burning. (The number listed after the materials below refers to the legal explanations of why the item may or may not be burned.)

- Plastic Milk Jug 1,5
- Leaves (dry) 8
- Treated Lumber 3
- Newspaper 5
- Insulated Electrical Wire 1
- Rubber Hose 1
- Tires 1
- Tree Branches 8,9
- Plastic Garbage Bags 1
- Waste Oil 4
- Asphalt Shingles 1
- Painted Siding 3
- Clean Dry Firewood 9
- Nylon Upholstery Fabric 1,2
- Corrugated Cardboard 5
- Asphalt Sealant 1
- Plastic Food Wrap 1
- Plywood 6
- Plastic Pipe 1
- Food Waste / Garbage 4
- Wooden Furniture 3
- Plastic siding 1
- Aluminum Beer Cans 5
- Pine Needles 8
- Nylon Carpet 1,2
- Polystyrene Plates 1,2
- Tar Paper 1
- Polystyrene Foam Packaging 1,2
- Urethane Foam Pad 1,2
- Plastic Soda Bottles 1,2
- Magazines / Catalogues 5
- Waste Mail 7
- OSB / Composite Board 6
- Plastic Weed Barrier 1
- Water Softener Salt Bag 1,2
- Paper Plates / Cups 10
- Napkins / Paper Towel 10
- Paper Grocery Bags 7
- Plastic Vapor Barrier 1
- Plastic Toys 1
- Old Building 11
- Untreated Unpainted Lumber 9

Explanations & Alternatives:
1. All plastic, rubber and asphalt materials are prohibited from open burning under state law.
2. This synthetic material is “plastic” and may not be burned.
3. Wood that is painted or chemically treated may not be burned under state law.
4. These materials are specifically prohibited from open burning under state law.
5. These materials must be recycled under state and local recycling laws. They cannot be burned. (It is legal to use a small amount of paper or cardboard material to kindle a fire.)
6. These materials contain resins and glues making them unsuitable for burning. They are not “dry unpainted, untreated wood” as referenced and exempted in the law.
7. Even though state law allows burning after removing any plastic, many local recycling programs cover these materials. Recycling is a better alternative. If recycling is not an option, proper disposal is better than burning.
8. Even though state law allows burning, composting and/or beneficial use of this material is a better alternative.
9. Clean dry unpainted untreated wood is legal to burn, but if it isn’t going to be beneficially used for heating, consider options other than burning.
10. This waste paper material is not recyclable. Proper disposal is a better option than burning. Wet paper or paper mixed with plastic can’t be burned.
11. Individuals or businesses may not burn a building. The only exception is that a building may be burned only by a fire department for training purposes after notification to DNR and removal of illegal materials.

Additional Information:
- For additional information, contact your DNR service center or log onto the DNR Open Burning Web site: http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/ob/.
- Does your municipality have an open burning ordinance? Check with your local clerk or fire chief.
- The open burning regulations are in ch. NR 429 and s. NR 502.11, Wis. Adm. Code.