



LEHIGH COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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LEHIGH COUNTY OFFICIALS ENCOURGE RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

Lehigh County, PA- Lehigh County Commissioner voted to pass Resolution #2024-54, establishing a temporary, countywide ban on open burning. The burn ban takes effect 9:00 pm E.S.T. on Friday, November 15, 2024 and shall continue through 9:00 pm E.S.T on Sunday, December 15, 2024 unless extended or rescinded prior to that expiration.

This proactive measure, passed by unanimous vote during the November 13, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, responds to heightened wildfire risks due to ongoing dry conditions, strong winds, and fluctuating temperatures, which have significantly increased fire danger across the region.

The burn ban was recommended by Lehigh County's District Fire Warden, Randy Metzger, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Supported by over 23 Fire Chiefs across Lehigh County, this recommendation underscores the urgent need to mitigate fire hazards and protect life and property in Lehigh County. The burn ban is a vital step in safeguarding Lehigh County's residents and properties during these exceptionally dry conditions.

Details of the Burn Ban

The burn ban prohibits all forms of open burning, which includes any outdoor burning of materials such as garbage, leaves, grass, twigs, paper, vegetation from land clearing, and any other debris. Open burning is defined as burning conducted in burn barrels (screened or unscreened), fire rings, or directly on the ground in any outdoor location.

The following exceptions are not restricted under this temporary ban:

- Propane or gas stoves for outdoor cooking
- Charcoal grills for cooking purposes
- Tobacco use in any form, such as cigarettes and cigars
- Campfires contained within fire rings at state, federal, or Department of Environmental Protection licensed campgrounds

Enforcement and Fines

Enforcement of the burn ban will be carried out by all sworn police officers across Lehigh County.

Violations of the burn ban are treated as a summary offense, with the following fine structure:

- **First Offense:** A fine of up to \$100
- **Second Offense:** A fine of up to \$200
- **Third and Subsequent Offenses:** A fine of up to \$300

In municipalities that have existing ordinances prohibiting open burning, police officers have the discretion to issue citations under either the municipal ordinance or the County's burn ban resolution. Please note that violators cannot be cited under both the County resolution and a local ordinance for the same infraction.

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