

## **Why is Missoula County going to an Online Burn Permit system?**

- Missoula County typically issues between 5,000 and 8,000 burn permits in a year. Getting a permit typically requires traveling to a fire department and may even include waiting in line. Some departments were inundated with nothing more than writing permits. Having the system available online should streamline this process considerably. Anyone can get their permit at any time, even on the day they want to burn! The system will also streamline information sharing between fire departments and dispatch centers. Under the old system, it often took many hours of searching through paper files to verify if someone had a burn permit.

## **Where do I go to get my burn permit?**

- Website: <https://app.mt.gov/burnpermit/>, click on Start, and select Missoula County.
- Local Fire Department, (check with your department, not all of them are able to issue permits all the time), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Swan Unit, Clearwater Unit, or Missoula Unit offices (check or credit card only), Missoula City-County health department, or the Swan Ecosystem Center. Swan Unit of DNRC will take cash. US Forest Service offices will not be able to take money in any form so will be unable to issue permits at this time.

## **What if I don't have access to a computer with internet?**

- You can still get a permit but you will need to drive to your local fire department, DNRC office, or health department office. Please check with the office before driving there. Not all departments have someone at the office at all times. You must still pay \$5 for the permit. Please note, DNRC offices (except for the Swan Unit office) will not take cash; you must pay online with credit card or check.

## **How can I pay for my permit?**

- The online system is secure and will accept any major credit card or you can pay with an electronic check. If you need to pay with cash, you will need to go to the Missoula City-County Health Department at 301 West Alder St, Missoula, the Swan Unit DNRC at 34925 MT Hwy 83, Swan Lake, MT 59911, or check with your local fire department.

## **What if I want to pay with cash?**

- Cash payments are discouraged. However, if this is the only way you can pay, you can still do so. Check with your local fire department or go into the Missoula City-County Health Department or Swan Unit office during business hours to get your permit.

## **How do I know what kind of permit I need?**

- There are three categories of burn permits available in Missoula County: General, Essential Agriculture, and Wildland. Descriptions are below:
  - **General** – General cleanup of untreated vegetative waste that does not include trade waste. All materials must be generated onsite. NOTE: In the Air Stagnation Zone, piles of grass or deciduous leaves may not be disposed of through outdoor burning.
  - **Essential Agriculture** – Outdoor burning conducted on a farm or ranch to eliminate excess vegetative matter from an irrigation ditch or cultivated fields, or to improve range conditions or wildlife habitat. Agricultural burning should only be conducted when no reasonable alternative methods of disposal are available.
  - **Prescribed Wildland** – Planned outdoor burning that is conducted on forest land or relatively undeveloped range land to improve wildlife habitat or range conditions, promote forest regeneration, reduce fire hazards resulting from forestry practices, control forest pests and diseases, or promote any other accepted silvicultural practices.

### **What if I have multiple burn piles? Do I need a separate \$5 permit for each one?**

- No. Each permit holder can have several burn locations. The system will ask you to identify each one. Keep in mind that you are responsible for burns in all locations you identify and must activate your permit by location if there is more than one.
- One exception to this is if you are trying to get two different permits (one for “General” and one for “Essential Agriculture” for example). In this case, you will need to pay for two permits (\$10).

### **I used to make a donation to my fire department, can I still do that?**

- Absolutely! Fire Departments will still take donations. The \$5 fee for a permit will not go to the fire department, however, as it is needed to pay for the setup cost and administration of the online system.

### **How do I know if I can burn?**

- Once you have your permit, you must activate it before burning. Activation can take place by calling the phone number on the permit (similar to checking the burn hotline before), or by logging in to the burn permit online system to activate your permit. **You MUST activate your permit on each day you plan to burn.**

### **What if I forget to activate my burn permit?**

- You must activate your burn permit each day you plan on burning, for the location in which you plan to burn. This will ensure that people aren’t burning on days when burning is closed due to poor air quality or fire danger. If you burn without activating your permit, your burn will be treated as an illegal burn.

## **How early can I get my permit?**

- The system should be up and running before the start of General Burning Season, March 1<sup>st</sup> 2012.

## **Who do I call if I'm having a problem?**

- If you have questions about outdoor burning in Missoula County or the online permitting process, you can contact the Missoula City-County Health Department at 258-4755. For technical issues such as a website malfunction, you can contact Montana Interactive through the online permitting website.

## **What if I want to get my permit on the weekend?**

- You may! This is one of the biggest benefits to the online system. You get your permit when it is convenient for you, whether that is on the weekend or three in the morning. Simply log on to <https://app.mt.gov/burnpermit/> and get your permit. Some fire departments may still issue permits on the weekend from their offices. Check with your local department for details.

## **What about the City burn permit process?**

- Parcels in the city that are at least 1 acre in size may qualify for a General Season outdoor burn permit. City residents may purchase a permit online or in person, but the permit will not be eligible for activation until after the burn site has been inspected by the Missoula City Fire Department. Once the MC Fire Department approves the burn, it can be activated either online or via the phone. All burns MUST be activated on the day you wish to burn.

## **What is my \$5 permit fee paying for?**

- Your fee pays for the setup cost of the online system and also covers a transaction fee assessed for each permit.