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Outdoor Burning Opens Monday, March 1st in Missoula County

February 26, 2021 -- Missoula, Montana – Spring is coming, Missoula, and that means the start to outdoor burning in the county!

The General Outdoor Burning Season opens on March 1, 2021 in Missoula County. If you are planning to burn, please remember that all outdoor burning requires a Missoula County outdoor burn permit, and the only material that may be disposed of by burning is untreated wood and vegetation generated onsite. Permits cost \$7.00 and can be purchased or renewed online at www.burnpermit.mt.gov or in person at most local fire protection agencies. Some agencies may be closed to the public due to COVID-19, so please call ahead. Within Missoula City limits, parcels must be at least one acre or more in size to be eligible for an outdoor burn permit and recreational fires are banned year-round. Additionally, inside the Missoula Air Stagnation Zone (an area that stretches about four miles outside Missoula City limits), it is illegal to burn piles of leaves and grass because these burns are typically very smoky. If you are within the Air Stagnation Zone, you may dispose of leaves and grass by composting them or delivering them to a facility such as Garden City Compost.

While Essential Agriculture Burning (burns to clear vegetative debris on a farm or a ranch) and Prescribed Wildland Burning (ecosystem and slash burns on forested or undeveloped rangeland) also open March 1st, most burns in Missoula County fall under the “General” permit category. To learn more about outdoor burning seasons, permits, and safe burning tips, visit missoulacounty.us/airquality, WildfirePartnersMissoula.org, or MCFPA.org.

Spring is the perfect time to be proactive and complete your outdoor burning before fire season arrives! Hot and dry conditions often close the General Burning Season down by early July, so getting an early start to yard clean-up is the best way to ensure you don't get stuck with piles you can't burn! Spring is also a great time to “harden” your home—or make it more resistant to wildfire. Clean your roof, gutters and eaves of leaves and debris, remove flammable items from under porches, and trim tree branches overhanging your home. Cover outside vents with 1/8 in. mesh screening. The spots and corners where snow collects around your home are also where leaves and needles like to gather, and where wind-driven embers from a wildfire can find purchase! Removing flammable items from on and around your home where embers can hide and smolder could be the key to your home surviving a wildfire.

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