



Bonfire Control

It's not illegal to have a bonfire but only do so as a last resort. By following the advice in this factsheet you are less likely to be a nuisance to your neighbours.

If you are affected by smoke this will advise you how we can help.

Bonfires produce smoke, especially when damp and smouldering. We receive a lot of complaints about smoke, smut, and smell from bonfires. Smoke prevents people from opening windows, enjoying their gardens, hanging out washing, and can reduce visibility on roads.

What can you do?

Quite often the persons causing the smoke nuisance are unaware that they are disturbing other people.

We recommend that the first step you take is to speak to the person directly. However, it is important that you remain calm. You may feel awkward, but they may not be aware of the distress they are causing and it will hopefully make them more considerate in the future. However if this fails contact us.

Factors considered:

We will consider the following factors to decide whether a Statutory Nuisance exists:

- Time, duration and frequency of bonfires
- The effect of the smoke on neighbours' use of their property.

What the Council can do

We can carry out a standard nuisance complaint investigation, detailed as follows:

- We receive your complaint and acknowledge it by letter, telephone or a visit.
- We contact the alleged offender and advise them that a complaint has been made and that we will be taking steps to prevent a nuisance.
- We provide detailed record sheets for you, the complainant, to fill in. These provide us with important evidence as to whether a nuisance is being caused and show us if there is any pattern or routine in its occurrence.
- We will try to witness the nuisance, either in person during office hours, or via a pre-arranged visit outside normal office hours.
- If our investigating officer has not yet established a nuisance, we send a formal letter to the alleged offender to inform him/her that complaints are continuing to be received.
- Once a nuisance has been witnessed by an officer, we can undertake enforcement action, which may include serving the offender with an Abatement Notice.
- If the notice is not complied with we may prosecute the person causing the nuisance. There is a maximum fine of £5000 in domestic cases and £20000 for commercial and industrial premises.

Alternate action -Taking your own action

It may be that we are unable to witness the smoke or are of the opinion that a Statutory Nuisance does not exist. In such cases it is possible to complain directly to a magistrates Court under section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The clerk to the justices can be contacted at: Worcester Magistrates Court, Castle Street, Worcester. Tel: 01562 514000

Alternative Disposal Methods

Composting

Rather than burning garden waste or disposing of food waste in your dustbin, why not compost? a compost bin will produce a useful soil conditioner, saving money on commercial products. Composting converts waste into a valuable resource and recycles nutrients back into the soil. Remember you need a balance of greens and browns Problems can occur when too much of one type of material is added.

YES PLEASE!	NO THANKS !
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual weeds• Bedding from vegetarian pets e.g. rabbits• Crushed eggshells• Fruit and vegetable peelings• Grass or hedge clippings• Hay and straw• Leaves• Old flowers and plants• Paper & card• Teabags and coffee grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bones• Cooked food scraps• Dairy products• Diseased plants• Dog or cat litter• Meat and fish scraps• Nappies

Shredding

Wood waste can be shredded to make it suitable for composting or mulching.

Recycling

Many household waste items can be recycled at local recycling banks, or collected in addition to your normal refuse. Waste can also be bagged up and taken to the local amenity site.

For further information on any of the above disposal methods please contact 01386 565245

However if you still feel that a bonfire is the best practicable option for disposing of your rubbish, follow the guidelines below to ensure that you do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

Good Bonfire Guide

- Inform your neighbours
- Burn dry material only
- Do not use flammable liquid to encourage a bonfire
- Check weather conditions, damp still days and evenings can cause smoke to stay in the area. Also if windy, the smoke could be blown and cause a nuisance.
- Do not burn household rubbish and items containing plastic, foam, paint, rubber, or bottles and cans as they will explode when burnt
- Try not to burn at weekends or bank holidays
- Never leave a bonfire smouldering or unattended. Fire can spread to fences or buildings and scorch trees and plants
- Always check for hibernating wildlife and sleeping pets, as piles of garden waste are often used as a refuge by animals

Contact: Environmental Protection Section, Environmental Services, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, WR10 1PT

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www.wychavon.gov.uk/es

