

## What's the legal position?

Although many people assume that there are specific bye-laws to prohibit bonfires, there are none within the Three Rivers District. If used sensitively, the occasional bonfire should not cause a major problem and an outright ban would be unreasonable. Not only would it be difficult to enforce, occasionally a bonfire is the best practical way to dispose of garden waste.

However, if a neighbour is causing a nuisance by burning rubbish, the law is on your side. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a statutory nuisance includes "smoke, fumes or gases emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance". In practice, to be considered a nuisance, a bonfire would have to be a regular problem and interfering substantially with your well-being, comfort or enjoyment of your property.

If you do light a fire (and we hope you won't) try not to choose a damp day when smoke hangs in the air for long periods, or very windy days when smoke may be carried over roads, neighbouring properties, lines of washing or when windows may be open.

Burn only dry wood to minimise the quantity of smoke produced. Never add rubber tyres, sump oil, plastics or household rubbish. Exploding bottles and cans are also a hazard when rubbish is burned.

Always remember:

That bonfires can be dangerous and should be attended at all times.

A fire should never be left to smoulder - always douse it with soil or water.

Don't allow your fire to continue after dusk.

Piles of garden waste are often used as a refuge by animals, so check before you start.