



Bolton Fire Department

15 Wattaquadock Hill Road

Bolton, Massachusetts 01740

To: General Distribution
From: John Mentzer, Fire Chief
Subject: Policy on the use of fire pits or outside fireplaces
Date: July 16, 2013

The Bolton Fire Department will allow the use of residential fire pits or metal, ceramic or masonry outdoor fireplaces within the context of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 48 Section 13 which provides for the use of outside cooking fires with the following conditions:

.... persons eighteen years of age or older may, without a permit, set, maintain or increase a **reasonable fire for the purpose of cooking**, upon sandy or gravelly land free from living or dead vegetation or upon sandy or rocky beaches bordering on tidewater, **if the fire is enclosed within rocks, metal or other nonflammable material.....**

In addition, fire pits or outside fireplaces must be located at least 30' from any structure in an open area. They must be attended when in use and fully extinguished when their use is done. The fuel being used for the fire must be sized appropriately for the enclosure and in no case larger than 4" in width or diameter. Rubbish, garbage or other trash or debris must not be used as fuel. A "reasonable" fire will be considered as one where the fuel is arranged so to as be 24" or less in diameter and 24" or less in height from the bottom of the enclosure.

Before each use the homeowner is asked to notify the Fire Department by calling the Bolton Public Safety dispatch center at 978-779-2276 which will record their name, address, callback phone number and approximate hours the fire will be in use.

During periods of elevated fire danger the Fire Department may prohibit their use entirely.

If the Fire Department receives complaints regarding air quality as a result of outside cooking fires or fire pits, reports of unauthorized fuels being burnt, reports that the fire is not of a "reasonable" size or location as defined above, or the fire is deemed to be otherwise unsafe, the fire will be extinguished and an Unauthorized Burning report filed. Repeat offenders will be subject to fines as defined in [M.G.L. 148](#) and [C.M.R. 527](#).

This policy may be modified or updated at any time by the Fire Chief.