



## Bonfires and allotments



Any plot-holder who is planning to set fire to waste on their plot should first consider whether this is the best way to dispose of material. The fire will release pollutants such as carbon dioxide and dioxins, which are damaging to local air quality and human health. The pollutants have a particularly acute effect on asthmatics, bronchitis sufferers, people with heart conditions, children and elderly.

## Bonfires

Most green waste can be composted, even some diseased foliage- see NAS "Why Make Compost" leaflet for more information. Items should not be brought on to the site to be burnt and general waste including wood from structures etc should be disposed of at the council recycling centre.

Bonfires also can also cause a nuisance to your fellow plot-holders and neighbouring residential properties, regular fires on a plot could be classed as a statutory nuisance and an abatement notice issued by the council. Smoke drifting across a busy road can cause a hazard and a plot-holder would face a fine if it endangered traffic or caused injury.

*Fire can spread and cause damage to property and plants, even if there are no flames, radiated heat alone can cause nearby plants and structures to catch fire.*



## Communal Bonfires

Associations who hold an annual communal bonfire to both dispose of waste and hold a social gathering must undertake a thorough event risk assessment; bearing in mind that children will be less careful than adults. You should also check that you have appropriate Public Liability insurance for your activities.

Before the event inform your local fire service, they will need to know:

- Your name and contact details
- The location of the bonfire
- Where it might be seen from
- Start and end time

Follow the guidelines in this leaflet about when and how to burn, if you need an accelerator use fire lighters to avoid flare-ups. One person should be responsible for the bonfire and plot-holders cautioned that children should be supervised at all times.



## General Waste

Although the society supports the recycling and re-purposing of items that would otherwise end up in landfill it is important that plot-holders do not let this sort of waste build up on their plots. Items that have not been put to good use should be disposed of at council recycling centres- NOT put on a bonfire.

*'Smoke drifting across a busy road can cause a hazard and a plot-holder would face a fine if it endangered traffic or caused injury.'*

## Bonfire Rules

If bonfires are permitted on your site, your tenancy agreement will include further rules about when they are permitted and what can be burnt. If you do have permission to hold a bonfire and your fellow plot holders and immediate neighbours do not mind, we recommend the following procedure opposite and remember- **always call 999** if you can't control the fire.

- **Only** small amounts of dry garden waste that cannot be composted should be burnt.
- **Check** the air quality before you burn 0800556677 or <http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk>
- **Use** an incinerator if possible.
- **Position** the fire well away from any structures as well as large plants and trees.
- **Always** check for hibernating animals if you do have an open fire.
- **Avoid** lighting a fire on damp days and in the evening when smoke hangs in the air.
- **Only** burn dry material. NEVER burn household rubbish, empty chemical containers, plastic, foam
- **Avoid** burning on windy days as the wind may blow sparks onto neighbouring properties.
- **Never** under any circumstances use an accelerator (e.g. petrol) to get a bonfire started.
- **Never** leave the bonfire unattended and have something to hand to extinguish the flames if they should get out of hand.
- **Always** wait until everything has burned down before leaving the site. Once finished, dampen down the bonfire with water making sure the fire is out and surroundings are safe.





There are laws about burning certain types of waste and to prevent bonfires causing a nuisance.

Find more advice on bonfires and waste disposal on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/garden-bonfires-rules>

### Become a member of The National Allotment Society.

Membership of The National Allotment Society comes with a raft of benefits, from discounts on horticultural products through to initial legal advice and horticultural expertise. To become a member visit [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk) or call **01536 266576**



O'Dell House, Hunters Road, Corby, Northamptonshire  
NN17 5JE T: 01536 266576 • E: [natsoc@nsalg.org.uk](mailto:natsoc@nsalg.org.uk)  
• [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)