Examples of legal devices used for burning in the City of Urbandale.

Propane and natural gas fire pit or bowl devices are allowed as long as all manufacturers’ instructions and recommendations are followed.

Propane and natural gas grills are allowed as long as all manufacturers’ instructions and recommendations are followed. Charcoal or any cooking devices that produce ash or embers are not allowed to be used or stored within 20 feet of multi-story buildings like apartments and condominiums.

Learn More About Safety:

www.urbandale.org - UFD website
www.nfpa.org - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
www.homefiresprinkler.org - Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition
www.usfa.dhs.gov - United States Fire Administration (USFA)
www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/ - Iowa State Fire Marshal

No Open Burning in the City of Urbandale

Information regarding the rules and regulations of open burning, grill usage, and why open burning is not allowed in the City of Urbandale.
City of Urbandale Open Burning Policy:
The Urbandale Fire Department would like to remind Urbandale residents that under an ordinance enacted by the Polk County Board of Health and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, there is no open burning allowed within the City of Urbandale.

This includes the Dallas County portion of Urbandale.

Under this ordinance the use of wood burning patio fireplaces, chimineas, fire pits, fire bowls, bonfires, leaf burning, and any other open wood or debris burning are deemed illegal.

Rules for the Preparation of Food:
Fires for the preparation of food are allowed and this ordinance does not apply to charcoal or gas BBQ grills.

However, charcoal grills are not allowed to be used or stored within 20 feet of apartment and condominium buildings.

Wood burning units for the preparation of food must have a grate for food preparation and provisions for holding the fire off of the ground.

Natural gas or propane fire pits/bowls that are NOT used to burn any other combustible materials are allowed.

What Happens When You Burn:

Plastic milk jugs: These contain chlorine. When burned, toxic dioxins are emitted.

Leaves and branches: Particulate matter (PM) is released, which interferes with respiratory systems.

Plastic garbage bags: These contain polyethylene, which releases dioxins when burned.

Asphalt shingles: Burning these will release PAHs (a carcinogen), hydrogen sulfide (a toxic gas) and possibly asbestos and silica (causes of lung disease).

Upholstered couch: Contains formaldehyde and dioxins.

Plastic PVC pipe: A huge amount of dioxins will be released.

Magazines/catalogues: Burning paper bleached with chlorine, dyes and inks from the printing process will create dioxins.

Department of Natural Resources

According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, burning waste and trash releases toxic chemicals into the air.

At one time, open burning was considered an “easy and cheap way to dispose of waste”, however, now it can threaten the health and environment considerably.

This is because the products used today by consumers have several chemicals in their make-up that were not being used 50-60 years ago.

If you have any further questions about open burning, please contact the Urbandale Fire Department at 278-3970.