



CONTACT:
Dan Brown
Dubuque Fire Chief
563-589-4160
dbrown@cityofdubuque.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Compliance and courtesy urged with recreational fires

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque is reminding residents to abide by the City’s ordinance related to recreational fires this summer and to practice common courtesy when they consider having a backyard fire.

The International Fire Code (IFC), which is adopted by the City of Dubuque, requires recreational fires to be in an approved container or fire pit not to exceed 36 inches in diameter. All vegetation and combustible materials should be eliminated from the area prior to ignition. Fires must be at least 15 feet from any structure. The fire may not exceed 5 feet in height. The fire must be attended constantly by a responsible adult and extinguished at the end of the event. Have a portable fire extinguisher or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment such as a garden hose, sand or dirt (with shovel) available for immediate utilization.

The City of Dubuque ordinance and the Dubuque Fire Department’s policy states that the fuel used must be strictly limited to charcoal products or natural growing form wood, dried, split or sawn to lengths no greater than 4 feet. No processed wood such as 2 x 4’s, plywood, building materials, etc. may be burned. Burning of papers, garden waste, rubbish, refuse, grass, leaves or brush is prohibited.

“Recreational fires can be safely and legally enjoyed by following the ordinance, but first, always be a good neighbor and be aware of wind direction,” says Dubuque Fire Chief Dan Brown. “Your neighbor probably won’t be happy if their windows are open or if their clean laundry is on the line and your smoke drifts in their direction.” Brown says atmospheric conditions should be such that smoke and gases are allowed to rise up and away. If smoke, gases, and fire become a nuisance, the fire must be extinguished.

Complaints about recreational fires should be directed to the Fire Department through the 911 Dispatch Center’s non-emergency number, 589-4415. A Fire Department representative will respond to complaints and make a determination as to whether the fire or smoke is a nuisance. Occasionally, a legal fire may be required to be extinguished. Failure to comply with this ordinance can result in a municipal infraction with a fine and court cost that could reach \$800 for the first offense.

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