# How to Burn Safely, Legally & Responsibly

## Best Practices for Residents & Firewise Communities

Purpose: Teach residents when, where, and how to conduct small pile burns safely and legally during the winter season.

## The Golden Rules

1. **Right Time** – Burn only on official burn days. Don't burn when windy (>10 mph). Allowable burn day (Air Quality and CAL FIRE or Truckee Fire allowed).
2. **Right Place** – Outside of City limits (no burning in Grass Valley, Nevada City or Truckee). Clear 10 ft around pile to mineral soil (no leaves, sticks, roots, stumps or anything that can burn). Keep away from trees, fences, and structures.
3. **Right Material** – Dry vegetation only, no piles comprised of just leaves or needles. No trash, plastics, or treated wood.
4. **Right Size & Permit for the Season** – Residential burning permit for piles ≤ 4x4 ft. General (LE 5 Permit) for larger or multiple piles. During winter, it may be permissible to burn without permits, check here: www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov .
5. **Right Supervision & Tools** – One adult always present with shovel, rake, hose or 5-gal bucket of **Ignition & Monitoring** – Light one corner, stay upwind, monitor continuously (lookout for sparks outside of the burn pile).
6. **Extinguish Completely** – Douse with water, stir and soak until cold to touch.

## Best Practices

- Wear all leather gloves, clothing with long sleeves / pants and natural fiber (like cotton, wool that won't melt onto your skin from embers) and eye protection.
- Bring water, snacks & a chair with you so you are not tempted to leave the fire unattended.

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Burning on Red Flag or windy days.
- Burning green or wet vegetation, or all leaves/needles.
- Leaving site before pile is cold.
- No tools, water, or supervision.
- Burning near brush or woodpiles or under trees.
- Waiting to call for help if it goes beyond your control.

## Safety Add-Ons

- Notify neighbors before lighting when doing large burns.
- Keep reflective vests and headlamps after dark.
- Have a backup hose and escape path.

***"A safe burn today prevents a dangerous fire tomorrow."***
***Model best practices. Teach by example. Celebrate safely.***