Crop Residue Burning: Where There's Fire, There's Smoke

Open burning of crop residue is a method used by growers in Idaho and other areas of the country to improve yields, reduce the need for herbicides and pesticides, and control disease, weeds, and pests.

Crop residue burning is controversial because it generates smoke, and inhaling smoke can impact public health. To minimize the health impacts of smoke generated by crop residue burning, state law and rules govern when, where, and how crop residue burning may be conducted in the state. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is the state agency assigned by the Idaho Legislature to manage this practice on lands other than the five Indian Reservations in Idaho. (For information on field burning on reservations in Idaho, contact individual Tribes.)

All types of burning, including crop residue burning, create smoke, which must be managed to minimize its impact on public health.

This brochure explains how Idaho's Crop Residue Burning Program works and what citizens can expect during the burn season. The following topics are addressed:

- How crop residue burning is regulated and conditions under which crop residue burning may and may not occur
- How to find out where crop residue burning has been authorized in your area
- How to protect yourself against adverse health impacts from smoke
- Where to go for answers to questions not covered in this brochure

For More Information

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

State Office
Air Quality Division
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0502

Regional Offices

Boise
1445 N. Orchard
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0550
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

Lewiston
1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

Coeur d'Alene
2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

Pocatello
444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

Idaho Falls
900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

Twin Falls
650 Addison Ave. W,
Suite 110
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190
toll-free: (800) 270-1663

Web Resources

Crop Residue Burning
www.deq.idaho.gov/crop-residue-burning

Rules for the Control of Air Pollution in Idaho
http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/58/0101.pdf

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Crop Residue Burning and Smoke Management in Idaho

A Guide for Citizens

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov

Regulation of Crop Residue Burning

Idaho's Crop Residue Burning Program is designed to protect public health while enabling growers to burn under specific conditions. Here are some of the program's major components:

- ***Timing:*** Air quality must be considered before burning can take place. Burning may only occur on days when air quality is good, as measured by pollutant levels, and is expected to continue to be good. Burn days are limited to *weekdays* during *daylight* hours only (usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.). Burning on weekends, holidays, and after sunset is prohibited.
- ***Location:*** Proximity to sensitive areas (towns, schools, roads, hospitals, canyon rims, local seasonal events, etc.) must also be considered before burning can take place. Burning can only occur in fields in which the crop residue was generated. The total number of bluegrass acres that can be burned statewide in any burn season is limited. Burning baled material like old hay or straw is not allowed.
- ***Permits:*** Growers must obtain authorization from DEQ before burning by registering for a burn permit (known as a Permit-by-Rule). Detailed information on when and where the burn is to take place is required. A fee per acre burned is also required. Burners must also obtain other permits, if required by other agencies.
- ***Training:*** Growers must be trained in proper burning techniques and good smoke management practices before they can burn and must attend training at least once every five years.

Access to Information on Burning

Public access to information on crop residue burning is readily available on DEQ's website at *www.deq.idaho.gov/crop-residue-burning*

Log on to access up-to-date information on:

- whether a day is a burn day or not
- the location, number of acres, and crop type permitted to be burned
- time frames for burning
- weather forecast
- real-time ambient air quality monitoring data.

Visitors can obtain burn information in an easy-to-understand graphic format. Click on a map of Idaho to zero in on a particular area to learn whether burning has been approved and, if so, when the burn will occur and the size of the burn. The website is updated twice daily during the burn season.

Protection Against Smoke Impacts

Smoke is comprised primarily of small particles and gases. Smoke can irritate the eyes and airways, causing coughing, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, headaches, stinging eyes, or runny nose. If you have heart or respiratory conditions, smoke might make your symptoms worse.

To protect against smoke impacts:

- Pay attention to local air quality reports and stay alert to news coverage or health warnings related to smoke.
- Stay indoors. If it looks smoky outside, it's probably not a good time to mow the lawn or go for a run. And it's probably not a good time for your children to play outdoors.
- Keep indoor air as clean as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed — unless it's extremely hot outside — to prevent smoke from entering your home.
- Run your air conditioner. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. Note: If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter.
- Avoid indoor sources of pollutants, including cigarette or other smoking; frying or broiling foods; vacuuming; and using paints, solvents, and adhesives.

Questions or comments?
DEQ is listening.
Call the Crop Residue Burning Hotline at 1-800-345-1007 or contact the DEQ Regional Office nearest you (see reverse).