

ENGLEWOOD AREA FIRE CONTROL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATION CENTER
516 Paul Morris Drive
Englewood, FL 34223



PHONE: (941) 474-3311
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www.inglewood-fire.com

FLORIDA FIRE PITS

Probably one of the most enjoyable times in the Sunshine State is when the weather has finally cooled off and sitting outside with friends is actually pleasant. With January being one of the area's coldest months, a light jacket might not do us sun lovers much good in the dropped temperatures. But a warm, toasty fire to sit by might just do the trick. Backyard fire pits are now very common in most neighborhoods and on any given chilly night the embers burning can be smelled while friends sit around and enjoy the fleeting weather. With fires and backyard pits come safety concerns, burning protocol and other matters. Read below to get all your fire burning information and tips to help you have pleasurable and safe winter entertainment.

Fire Laws and Regulations

Every state, county and local city has their own rules and regulations on burning backyard fires. Certain deed-restricted communities may even have their own policies for fires so you must be vigilant about learning and following these regulations to avoid a snafu that could put you in trouble with local law enforcement and neighborhood organizations. Also, it is nice to be thoughtful of your nearby neighbors when you decide to start a fire, especially if your homes border one another closely. Be aware of where smoke and debris may be blowing.

Local counties may or may not allow burning of yard waste. What is yard waste? Yard waste is vegetative debris such as grass clippings, brush, leaves, tree limbs, palm fronds, fallen branches, etc. In Englewood District burning of yard debris is prohibited. This material is to be recycled. Cooking with a fire is permitted as long as it is contained and yard debris is not used.

Open burning such as fires for cooking and warming are permitted as long as it is on private property and in a container approved by United Laboratories (many store bought fire pits are). Split, oak logs or instant logs from a store are the recommended and encouraged burning wood. Usage of screens around fire pits is also strongly encouraged to reduce travel of lit embers. Flames should reach no more than a foot tall. If your fire becomes a nuisance, it can be shut down by the local fire chief or fire department if he deems it necessary. If you have a homemade fire pit such as a pit with bricks around it and want approval of it, contact the fire marshal and he will take a look at it for you. To review the burning regulations, go to <http://inglewood-fire.com/fire-safety--prevention.html>, from there you can click on the Open Burns Requirements and Fire Prevention.

"Desire to Serve, Courage to Act"

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Firepit Safety

While outdoor fire pits may add to your garden or backyard, you still need to see it as something that can be dangerous when used improperly. Follow these tips for safe usage.

Do avoid burning a fire in an enclosed area. The area needs proper ventilation because the fumes can be harmful.

Don't use a fire pit on a lanai

Do plan your fire pit away from objects that are flammable

Do keep at least 10ft. away from houses, branches of overhanging trees, etc.

Do choose areas that are clean and clutter-free

Do begin with a small fire to understand the direction of the wind and effect on the flame

Do use gloves when handling materials to burn

Do keep fire pit area clean

Do have water and fire extinguishers close by, you can also use dry sand

Do maintain a considerable amount of distance away from the fire pit

Don't allow animals or children around the fire pit

Don't fill the pit with excess wood

Don't use lighter fluid to start a fire

Do make sure fire is completely extinguished when you are finished

Do always keep the local fire department number on hand in case of emergency

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What to Burn and Not to Burn

Different types of wood perform differently. Some wood may not burn long. Some may be harmful to the environment and your health. Hardwoods, such as oak and cherry, burn longer and cleaner. They are denser and produce less smoke while providing more heat energy. Hickory, maple, birch and elms are some other popular logs and there are plenty others. If you looking for instant logs, Eco Logs are a good option because they are inexpensive but burn a long time. They are compressed logs made from the dust created by hardwood floor manufacturing companies. The most important thing to remember when choosing wood, is to get logs that are cut to the right size of your fire pit and that they are properly dried.

Items that should NOT be burned in a fire pit are also very important to know. Below is a list of the most important items to stay away from when burning a fire:

- Pressure-treated wood (emits toxic fumes)
- Painted or stained wood (fumes may be toxic)
- Wood that is covered in sap and doesn't split easily
- Green wood
- Plastic, rubber, particleboard, plywood or paint. These materials can produce noxious, corrosive smoke and fumes.
- Burning garden waste, weeds, etc.
- Don't burn wood that creates black smoke or a noxious odor
- If you have a wood-burning fire pit then you can probably burn charcoal if you choose, but never burn wood in a gas-burning fire pit or vice versa.

Fire Starters

There are many different ways to start a fire. Numerous versions of fire kindles can be bought over the internet and provide easy ways to light and keep a fire going. But if you ever find yourself missing matches or a lighter, these interesting ideas may come in handy.

Strike a piece of steel, such as the blade of a pocket knife, against a flint or quartzite in a downward motion and cast the sparks onto dry fungus or birch bark to start a blaze.

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A magnifying glass can catch the sunlight and center the hot focal point of the light onto the center of dry kindling.

If there is no sun to use or you don't have the above items, you can use some steel wool, a 9 volt battery from a flashlight or radio and rub the two contacts with the steel until the wool is glowing. Then place onto the grass/fungus to ignite.

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