



Fire Permits

Do I need a permit?

A permit is required for the following activities:

- Outdoor fires- any fire outdoors (other than in an approved fire pit or approved incinerator)
- Structure fires- a fire confined to or within a building, structure, machine, or vehicle that will likely cause damage to or destruction of the structure

If you do not get a fire permit and you take part in the above burning activities, you may be fined under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424.

A permit is *not* required for the following activities:

- Fire pits or recreational campfires- must meet the requirements under the Fire Permit Bylaw (see below for what is required for fire pits)
- Incinerators or burn barrels- must meet the requirements under the Fire Permit Bylaw (see below for what is required for burn barrels and incinerators)
- Fireplaces- must meet the requirements under the Fire Permit Bylaw (see below for what is required for fireplaces)
- BBQs, fire rings, fire bowls, or other items used for cooking/heating that are fueled by propane or gas
- Smudge fires for repelling insects for livestock or preventing frost in an orchard or garden- the fire must be in a non-combustible receptacle and on a property 0.8 hectares (2 acres) or larger

Please be aware that although you do not need a permit for the above items if a Fire Ban is in place these may not be permitted. More information on fire bans is below.

How to get a permit

Permits are easy to get and are free. Fill out the form below (reading each question carefully) and submit it for review by a Lethbridge County representative. You must wait to receive an authorized permit by e-mail before you are permitted to burn. Permits are reviewed by staff Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding statutory holidays. If you think you will need a permit when the office is closed, be sure to apply for one in advance.

Permits are valid for 14 days once they are issued. You must follow the instructions on your permit and ensure you burn safely.

If you have questions about the permit application form, please call the Lethbridge County administration office at 403-328-5525.



What can I burn? What am I not allowed to burn?

Fire permit holders may burn the following items:

- Paper products
- Untreated wood (wood or wood products that don't contain preservatives)
- Yard waste (grass/tree clippings, leaves, branches, fallen trees, brush, weeds, etc.)
- Straw and stubble

These items cannot be burned, even with a fire permit:

- Wood or wood products that contain preservatives
- Plastic (including silage plastic, grain bags, and baler twine, **BUT**- these items can be recycled at the Iron Springs Transfer Station: <https://lethcounty.ca/p/recycling>)
- Rubber (including tires)
- Animal manure or cadavers
- Waste material from construction sites (untreated wood is permitted)
- Pathological waste
- Containers that have held chemicals or pesticides
- Oil

If you need clarification on what materials you can and cannot burn, please call Lethbridge County at 403-328-5525. **If you burn prohibited debris, you could be fined under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424.**

What are the penalties for illegal burning?

Under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424, fines apply for:

- Giving false information on a fire permit (up to \$2,000)
- Lighting a fire without a permit (up to \$1,000)
- Lighting a fire on another person's property without their consent (up to \$1,000)
- Depositing, discarding, or leaving any burning matter where it might light other objects on fire (up to \$1,000)
- Allowing a fire to give off dense smoke or odour that is a risk to public safety (up to \$10,000)
- Allowing smoke from a fire to impede visibility to vehicles on a road (up to \$10,000)
- Not extinguishing an illegal fire immediately (up to \$10,000)
- Not calling 911 immediately if you have lit an illegal fire and are unable to extinguish it (up to \$10,000)
- Lighting a fire that becomes a running fire (not controlled) (up to \$10,000)
- A running fire moving from your property to another person's property (up to \$10,000)



- Lighting an outdoor fire, structure fire, incinerator fire, or smudge fire without taking proper precautions to ensure the fire remains under control at all times (up to \$10,000)
- Burning prohibited items (up to \$10,000)
- Lighting an outdoor fire, structure fire, incinerator/burn barrel, or fire pit during a Fire Ban (up to \$10,000)
- Lighting an outdoor fire, structure fire, incinerator/burn barrel, or fire pit during a Fire Ban and that fire becoming a running fire on yours or another's property (up to \$10,000)
- Allowing your property to become a fire hazard (up to \$10,000)
- Obstructing a municipal official from carrying out their duties of this bylaw (up to \$10,000)

You may also be billed for the costs of an emergency response (fire departments) if:

- You light a fire without a permit and do not extinguish it, the fire department may extinguish it for you
- Your fire becomes uncontrollable, and a fire department is needed to extinguish it

Additionally, if your fire damages another person's property you may be liable and/or responsible for damages.

Fire pit specifications

Fire pits must meet the following criteria under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424:

- Constructed of bricks or concrete blocks, or heavy gauge metal, or other suitable non-combustible material
- No more than 1 metre (3.28 feet) wide and 0.6 metres (2 feet) high
- Cannot be closer than 5 metres (16.5 feet) from a property line or from any combustible material such as buildings, fences, decks, foliage, etc.
- Must be surrounded by a fire guard constructed of non-combustible material extending at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) in all directions of the fire pit
- The flame cannot be higher than 1 metre (3.28 feet) above the top of the fire pit
- Only wood, charcoal briquettes, propane, or natural gas can fuel the fire pit
- Must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult
- Must have a way to properly extinguish the fire

Fireplace specifications

Fire pits must meet the following criteria under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424:

- Constructed of materials, such as bricks or rocks that are heat and flame resistant
- Cannot be closer than 1 metre (3.28 feet) from a property line or from any combustible material such as buildings, fences, decks, foliage, etc.



- Must be at least 0.3 metres (1 foot) above surrounding grade
- Must have a chimney that is at least 2.5 metres (8.25 feet) high above the material burning area
- Must have a screen designed to contain sparks
- Fire chamber must not be larger than 1.25 metres (4 feet) wide and must be at least 0.4 metres (1.3 feet) deep (but not more than 0.6 metres (2 feet))

Burn barrel specifications

Burn barrels and incinerators must meet the following criteria under Lethbridge County's Fire Permit Bylaw #1424:

- Cannot be closer than 5 metres (16.5 feet) from a property line or from any combustible material such as buildings, fences, decks, foliage, etc.
- Constructed of materials, such as bricks, rocks, or heavy gauge metal (18 gauge minimum) that are heat and flame resistant
- Must not have any holes or thinning that has been caused by the oxidation of materials
- Must have a spark arrestor mesh screen of at least 0.7 centimetres (0.25 inches) of expanded metal (or equivalent) to contain sparks from the fire at all times
- Must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult
- The flame cannot be higher than 1 metre (3.28 feet) above the top of the fire pit
- Only wood, charcoal briquettes, propane, or natural gas can fuel the incinerator or burn barrel

Responsible burning

You must follow the regulations on your fire permit, which include:

- Thirty minutes before burning you must call the Lethbridge Public Safety Communications Centre at 403-329-1225 with your permit number and the estimated amount of time you will be burning. You must also call once burning is complete.
- Do not burn if the humidity % is lower than the temperature in degrees Celsius or if winds are greater than 15 kilometres per hour. View the Environment Canada website for current conditions: https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-30_metric_e.html
- You must not burn or immediately extinguish your fire if a Fire Ban is put in place
- You must have your fire permit with you while burning

Have enough water at the burning site to extinguish your fire. If your fire becomes out of your control, call 911 immediately.

Also, be mindful of your neighbours and others in the area who may be affected by the smoke or odour from your fire.



Fire Bans

If the Fire Hazard is high, Lethbridge County may impose a Fire Ban which automatically cancels all issued Fire Permits. Always check our website or the [Alberta Fire Bans website](#) for more information and before you burn to ensure no Fire Ban is in effect.

Fireworks

A permit is required to set off fireworks in Lethbridge County, and fines apply under the Fire Permit Bylaw #1424 for not obtaining one.

For more information on getting a fireworks permit, visit the fireworks webpage:

<https://lethcounty.ca/p/fireworks>