# Burning Garbage: A Problem for Our Communities

## What's so bad about burning garbage?

**It's unhealthy.** If you burn garbage, we will all breathe and eat it, because smoke and ash pollute the air, water and food supply.

**It's unsafe.** Burning garbage or brush leads to wildfires, property damage and sometimes loss of life.

**It's a nuisance.** The smoke and ash smell, and irritate eyes and lungs. It's especially bad for people with asthma or heart disease.

## We've burned for years. What has changed?

Garbage has changed in the last 50 years. Today's garbage contains plastics, dyes and other chemicals that release hazardous toxins when burned. Many of these materials were not around a few decades ago.

The pollutants from burning today's garbage cause many health problems and we understand them better than in the past.

We know more about how harmful smoke from burning garbage is, especially for kids and anyone with asthma or trouble breathing.

## Alternatives to burning

- ✓ Recycle paper, cardboard, bottles and cans.
- ✓ Compost leaves, grass clippings, small brush and vegetable food scraps.
- ✓ Donate or reuse old clothes, furniture and other household items.
- ✓ Send waste that can't be reused, recycled or composted to the landfill. Get a Dumpster for large amounts of waste, such as agricultural plastics and construction and demolition debris.

## Unhealthy and illegal

It is illegal for ANYONE to burn materials such as furniture, metal, painted or treated wood, plastics, shingles, siding, tires, and wire.

Please visit **http://dnr.wi.gov and search "open burning"** for more information on burning regulations.

Many communities have further restrictions on what can be burned, where and when. Contact your local officials to learn more.

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PUB WA-1373 2010
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