



ORLAND PARK CONTROLLED BURN POLICY

Effective Date:

November 3, 2025

Review Date:

November 3, 2027

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the preparations and procedures required to perform a controlled burn, especially at stormwater retention basins. The Village maintains over one hundred eighty (180) stormwater basins with over one hundred twenty (120) of those currently under stewardship by ecological restoration contractors (ERCs). ERCs typically recommend that a site undergo a controlled burn approximately once every five (5) years.

PROCEDURE

Controlled burns involve the planned and permitted use of fire to achieve land management and ecological goals, such as reducing wildfire risk, restoring native habitats, and managing invasive vegetation species. These burns are performed by licensed professional burn crews and typically involve use of a petroleum-based accelerant to ignite vegetation within the designated burn area.

A written plan must be provided by the contractor or entity performing the burn which details the purpose of the burn, the burn area, necessary equipment and personnel, potential hazards and safety measures, and weather conditions anticipated for the day of the burn.

1. Purpose

- a. The written burn plan must outline the purpose behind this specific controlled burn. Typical reasons for performing a burn may include the following:
 - Removing dead wood, leaves, or other debris to reduce potential fuel sources for wildfires
 - Reduce the presence of invasive plant species in the area
 - Promote the growth of native seedlings/saplings by removing competitor species and reintroducing nutrients into the soil

2. Burn Area:

- a. The contractor or entity performing the burn is to supply a map highlighting the boundaries of the designated burn area and its proximity to nearby residents or businesses

3. Necessary Equipment and Personnel:

- a. A crew of well-equipped, licensed professionals shall be documented for the tasks of igniting and managing the fire
- b. Necessary equipment may vary depending on the size of the specific burn, but should typically include the following:
 - Fire-protective clothing for each personnel
 - Handheld drip torches to ignite burn material
 - Backpack sprayers filled with water to extinguish small flames
 - Two-way radios for each personnel
 - Signage to notify local residents of the nearby burn

4. Potential Hazards:

- a. Identify any nearby buildings, trees, or other structures/landscaping which could be impacted by the burn
- b. Identify any areas where local pedestrian or vehicle traffic may be impacted by smoke presence
- c. Identify both the type of vegetation meant to be burned and the method of burning (i.e. if the vegetation will be mowed down first or if it will be burned in place)
 - i. Unless circumstances dictate it absolutely necessary, vegetation should not be burned in piles as in the Village's experience this method can increase the amount of lingering smoke in the local area and prolong the amount of time it takes for smoldering embers to fully extinguish

5. Safety Measures:

- a. The contractor must notify the Orland Fire Protection District and the Orland Park Police Department on the day they intend to perform a burn
- b. Contractor should identify an accessible water source on-site to refill backpack sprayers or combat flames too large for the handheld sprayers
- c. Contractor must outline their plan to establish break lines throughout the burn area to prevent fire spreading outside the planned burn area
- d. After the burn, crews will ensure that all smolders are extinguished and brought to the ground to prevent reignition
- e. Burn crew must have a contingency plan in place in case on-site conditions change and the burn needs to be ended early

6. Weather Conditions:

- a. The burn should be conducted under specific weather conditions including favorable wind speed and direction, temperature, and humidity to ensure fire stays with the burn area.
- b. Weather parameters on the day of the burn shall be as follows:
 - Temperatures between 25-75° F
 - Preferred 40-50° F
 - Humidity levels between 25-70%
 - Preferred 40-50%
 - Wind speeds between 5-20 mph
 - Preferred near 10 mph
 - Wind direction shall be chosen to avoid the largest possible area of smoke disturbance
 - Atmospheric mixing height at a minimum of one hundred (100) meters
 - Preferred three hundred (300) meters or higher
- c. No burning shall occur within forty-eight (48) hours of a previous precipitation event unless a test fire indicates smoke production will be at a minimum.
- d. Burns shall occur during pre-designated burning seasons. These seasons will be from February 15th – April 30th and from October 1st – December 15th.

The contractor or entity performing the burn shall be responsible for acquiring all necessary permits from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and Cook County Department of Environment & Sustainability.

1. **Permit Application:** An open burning permit from the IEPA is required, and the burn plan should be submitted with the application.
 - a. The Village of Orland Park Public Works and Police Departments, along with the Orland Fire District, will be notified of sites intended to be burned prior to each burn season.
 - b. Contractor shall provide site-specific burn plans and information when specific burns have been scheduled

Notifications: The public and local officials shall be notified before a controlled burn takes place to ensure awareness.

1. The contractor or entity performing the burn shall distribute notices of the burn to residents and businesses within three hundred (300) feet of the burn area at least twenty-four (24) hours before burning begins
2. Signage is to be displayed around the burn area alerting pedestrians and/or local traffic of burn in progress/smoke presence

Liability: Burners must adhere to the conditions of the permit and follow all regulations to avoid fines or penalties and to benefit from lesser liability standards if a claim arises.

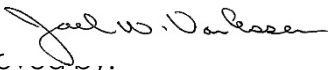
RESPONSIBILITIES

For controlled burns conducted as part of storm basin management projects, the Utilities Construction Project Technician will coordinate with contractors to ensure all policies are adhered to.

For controlled burns conducted for any other purpose, the Village project manager overseeing the relevant project will be responsible for ensuring all policies are adhered to.

This policy may be updated or revised at any time.

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