

The Manitoba Controlled Crop Residue Burning Program

It is the farmer's responsibility to ensure that burning is legal and safe, and that the smoke does not cause problems.

Smoke from burning crop residues affects people's health, road safety and the environment. The Burning of Crop Residue and Non-Crop Herbage Regulation deals with the legal aspects of crop residue burning. Crop residue is the straw, stubble, or chaff from any crop, including baled or stacked crop material, and the remains of any unharvested crop.

The Regulation

- Prohibits nighttime burning of crop residue year-round
- Restricts daytime burning between August 1 and November 15 to conditions laid out in daily burn authorizations
- Allows daytime burning between November 16 and July 31, from sunrise to sunset

Before You Burn Call: 1-800-265-1233

Or check for daily authorizations online at:
manitoba.ca/agriculture

If you must burn, find out whether burning is authorized in your area. Authorizations are issued by 11:00 a.m. daily. Even if burning is authorized, be sure winds will not cause smoke to travel towards roadways, towns or neighbouring residents. You must ensure that smoke will not create an unreasonable health or safety hazard. A fireguard must be in place to prevent the fire from spreading and fires must be supervised at all times.

How is a burn day decided?

The intent of the regulation is to control the smoke from crop residue burning. A good day for burning may not be a good day for smoke dispersion. Smoke disperses when it mixes with clean air. Generally, the greatest amount of clean air is available during the warmest part of the day and during periods of unstable weather (rainy or windy conditions). Warm, sunny days, often associated with high pressure systems, indicate that there is a limited amount of clean air to mix with the smoke. While these conditions may appear ideal for burning, smoke is often trapped near the ground.

Why is nighttime burning illegal year round?

Temperature changes after sunset usually limit smoke dispersion. At night, smoke tends to linger close to the ground, where it can cause health and safety concerns, rather than mixing with clean air higher up in the atmosphere.



Exemptions to the Regulation

The regulation allows small accumulations of straw to be burned outside of authorized periods if the straw is immediately impeding field operations such as seeding or tillage. These straw accumulations may result from wind, rain or water (floats), a broken bale, a windrow less than 100 feet long, or from stopping equipment. No more than three fires, with a combined area of one acre, can be burning at one time. Non-crop vegetation in ditches and yards, and residue from forage crops grown for seed may be burned any day between sunrise and sunset. Always check local regulations and bylaws before burning.

Burning Permits

In most parts of the province, a permit is not required when burning is authorized. Under certain circumstances, such as when specific safety concerns prevent burning during an authorized period, obtaining a permit may be necessary. Burning within certain areas may only be authorized with permits to limit the number of fires in a region.

A burning permit sets out a number of terms and conditions that must be followed. For example, a particular wind direction may be required to avoid creating smoke hazards on a nearby roadway. Permits will not be issued merely for convenience reasons. Even with a permit, farmers may face charges for burning unsafely or for having fires that cause smoke problems.

Other Jurisdictions

Some cities, towns and municipalities have their own burning bylaws, which may prohibit open air burning or require additional permits. Burning within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg requires a special permit. Call 204-986-6358 for more information. A permit from Manitoba Conservation is required for burning within burning permit areas. Be sure to check whether permits are required in your area.

Enforcement and Penalties

Charges may result for burning crop residue:

- outside authorized hours
- in areas not authorized
- at night
- in an unsafe manner that affects roadways or public health
- without proper supervision or adequate fireguards

Manitoba Conservation environment officers, RCMP and municipal police enforce the regulation. Infractions are normally dealt with under *The Summary Convictions Act*. Conviction carries a fine in excess of \$2,000. Charges for repeat or more serious offences may be laid under *The Environment Act*, which carries fines up to \$50,000. If an illegal or unsafe fire cannot be extinguished, the fire department may be dispatched at the offender's expense.

How to Apply for a Permit

Permit applications are available at any Growing Opportunities (GO) Office or online at: manitoba.ca/agriculture. To avoid delays, submit permit applications as early as possible prior to the anticipated burning day. Completed applications can be dropped off at any GO Office or faxed to 204-745-5690. Once an application has been reviewed, the farmer will be contacted.

To request a permit for a certain day, call the Crop Residue Burning Office at 204-745-5646. Depending on the amount of burning and the number of permit requests, a permit may be issued for one day or for several days. If a permit expires prior to burning being completed, a new permit can be issued.

For More Information:

- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives website: manitoba.ca/agriculture
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Crops Knowledge Centre at 204-745-5630.

Report Illegal Burning

Contact the environment officer at your local Manitoba Conservation office. The after-hours emergency line is: 204-944-4888.

Or call your local RCMP office. RCMP will normally respond if smoke is affecting highway safety.

Check Daily Burning Authorizations
Call: 1-800-265-1233
or visit: manitoba.ca/agriculture