

Leyden Bonfire Policy (Approved by Select Board 2023-07-17)

Purpose:

To outline approvals required so bonfires in Leyden are safe and conform to Massachusetts and federal Open Burning Regulations.

Fire Department Approval:

All bonfires must be approved in writing by the Fire Department. The Fire Department has discretion over the timing, safety, and staffing of the fire. Bonfires must comply with any and all restrictions set by the Fire Department regarding fire danger, air quality, timing, oversight, size, location, materials to be burned, and any other factors deemed important.

Select Board Approval:

After written approval by the Fire Department, any bonfire must be approved by majority vote of the Select Board. The Select Board is allowed to designate one "Ceremonial Bonfire" per year to mark a significant municipal event. This designation waives some of the provisions of Massachusetts Open Burning regulations.

Site Remediation:

A plan must be submitted to the Select Board for the repair of any site damage from bonfire activity, such as burn damage to the ground, negative impacts of hauling fuel, and removal of residue.

Fuel Restrictions:

Fuel must be free of materials or treatments that might impact the health of observers or neighbors. Examples might include but are not limited to poison ivy, chemically treated wood, or non-wood material. Hazardous fuel starters to light or maintain fires are prohibited.

Standard Conditions of Approval:

All bonfires must comply with all Massachusetts and federal regulations.

No bonfire should be initiated on a day with unsafe conditions under the complete discretion of the Fire Department, such as wind, drought, or other factors, insufficient personnel and apparatus to monitor fire, insufficient fire-suppression resources, or any other conditions deemed unsafe.

All bonfires must be continuously monitored by the Fire Department. The Fire Department has complete authority to end a burn at any time.

No bonfire should be initiated on a day where the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds or is forecast to exceed 100 ("Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups") as determined by the AirNow.Gov website:

<https://www.airnow.gov/?city=Town%20of%20Leyden&state=MA&country=USA>

Firepit/Campfires vs. Bonfires

Please note, if a campfire does not meet the following standards, it is considered an open burn and must comply with open burn regulations:

- Used for cooking,
- Kept to a reasonable size
- Located away from combustible materials
- Contained in a non-flammable enclosure, and
- Tended by someone who is 18 years of age or older.

The public, including renters must not create firepits on town property, and must only use town-constructed fire enclosures if explicitly allowed in rental agreement or posted rules, and only if conforming to all requirements.

Relevant Resources:

- Open Burning Regulations: Jan 15 – May 1 from 10am – 4pm. Note this outlines exemptions for agriculture and fire training: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-10/documents/ma-310-cmr-7-07.pdf>
- Exceptions for Ceremonial Burns.
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section142H>
- Air Permitting Division of Mass DEP, Courtney Danneker, (857) 301-0758