

## Ozone Season Begins May 1

*To protect air quality, outdoor burning restrictions will be in effect from May 1 - September 30*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 27, 2026)** – May 1 will mark the beginning of ozone season in the commonwealth. To protect families and preserve air quality, open burning restrictions will remain in place for several counties through September.

“Protecting families across the commonwealth is always our top priority,” said John Lyons, secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet. “Everyone can help do their part to protect our air, health and quality of life by observing these important guidelines during ozone season.”

Burning of brush, tree limbs, leaves, or natural growth from land clearing is not allowed in Boone, Boyd, Bullitt, Campbell, Kenton, or Oldham counties, nor in parts of Lawrence County during Ozone Season. Jefferson County has open burning restrictions all year. These rules are in place because these counties have exceeded the federal air quality standards before and are more likely to have pollution problems in warmer months.

Ozone is protective when it occurs high in the stratosphere, but ground-level ozone is a summertime health risk, created when pollutants chemically react in the atmosphere in the presence of heat and sunlight. Ground-level ozone irritates breathing passages and can trigger asthma attacks. Asthma affects more than 380,000 Kentuckians. Open burning contributes to ozone pollution. In recent weeks, wildfires have impacted air quality and spread smoke into neighborhoods, which can be especially harmful to children, older adults, and people with ongoing health problems.

“Recent events have reminded us how quickly our air quality can change and how important it is to work together to protect it,” said Michael Kennedy, director of the Division for Air Quality. “By following outdoor burning rules and making smart choices, we help keep our communities safe and healthy for ourselves and our neighbors. There is no greater investment than the air we all share.”

Burning trash is illegal everywhere in Kentucky, all year long. State law prohibits burning things like plastics, tires, coated wire, and treated wood because they release dangerous toxins into the air. Breaking these rules can lead to fines or other penalties.

Additional guidelines include:

- Avoid burning brush and yard waste during ozone season
- Visit <https://eec.ky.gov/Environmental-Protection/Air/Pages/Open-Burning.aspx> for information about what you can and cannot burn, seasonal open burning restrictions, and how to report illegal burning.
- Check local outdoor burning rules. Remember, ozone season restrictions and wildfire burn bans are different. Burn bans are set by local officials when fire risk is high. For the latest on local burn bans, visit [eec.ky.gov/CountyBurnBan](http://eec.ky.gov/CountyBurnBan) or contact your county judge executive's office.
- Throw away trash at approved sites. Throw away non-recyclable items at approved landfills.
- If you need to get rid of yard waste, try composting at home, using it as mulch, or arranging for local yard waste pickup if it is available.
- Stay informed of air quality updates at <https://www.airnow.gov>
- If you or someone in your family is sensitive to air pollution, consider staying indoors, keeping windows closed, and using an air purifier when air quality is low.
- Think about wearing a mask if you need to be outdoors when pollution is high.
- If you see illegal burning, take action and report it by emailing [burnlaw@ky.gov](mailto:burnlaw@ky.gov).

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