



## Recreational Fire Guidelines

Outdoor fires present a serious hazard at Wintergreen for several reasons. The fact that much of this community is within a mature forest is just one reason why carefully managing fire pits, fireplaces, and outdoor grills is important to every property owner and guest at Wintergreen.

The guidelines outdoor “recreational fires” at Wintergreen have two primary objectives—embers must be trapped from escaping and no combustible materials can be located nearby. Therefore,...

**Burning of trash, brush, or other debris within Wintergreen for any reason is strictly prohibited.**

**Open burning is prohibited without exception.** “Open burning” is the burning of any material where the “products of combustion” are emitted directly into the atmosphere without passing through a screened stack, duct or chimney and without containment on all sides. **By definition, this includes campfires, and also bans many “fire pits” sold by retailers.**

**Almost all in-ground fire pits are also prohibited,** which means no ground-level fire areas where a wood fire is contained within a ring of rocks, cinderblocks, metal ring, or similar non-combustible material, where smoke and embers are emitted without passing through a screened chimney or without a “[smokeless](#)” design and a screened lid. Charcoal briquette grilling is not considered open burning nor is it a recreational fire.

*Property owners are encouraged to use propane fire features outdoors. Propane fires do not emit embers and are therefore much safer in our forest environment than wood-burning fires. Screening is not necessary and in-ground propane fire pits are allowed.*

**Questions? Call 434-325-8532 or email [mbarker@wtgpoa.org](mailto:mbarker@wtgpoa.org)**

**Some recreational outdoor fireplaces are allowed.**

- Chimeneas (free-standing front-loading fireplaces or ovens with a bulbous body and usually a vertical smoke vent or tall chimney) are usually allowed when properly sited.
- Also allowed are free-standing portable outdoor fire features that allow wood to be burned completely inside a container, are capable of containing fire embers, have adequate screening (one-fourth inch or smaller metal screen), and a chimney no less than 18 inches tall.
- Certain “smokeless” fire pits with screens are allowed. These are outdoor wood-burning fireplaces which limit smoke and embers released into the air through a “regenerative burn process” (also called “[secondary combustion](#)”). Some of the more popular approved “smokeless” devices are made by [Solo Stove](#) & [Breeo](#). Both portable and in-ground designs are available.

**How allowed outdoor recreational fire features are sited and managed on-site is also regulated.**

- Outdoor fire features are not permitted within 15 feet of combustible materials and structures.
- Outdoor fires units must be on a fireproof surface.
- Outdoor fires must be maintained by someone at all times until completely extinguished. Adequate means to immediately extinguish the fire such as a water source, fire extinguisher, and hand tools must be on hand.

## The state, the county, and Wintergreen take fire safety seriously

- The state has made it illegal to have any fires of any type (even a tiny grill) on multi-unit condo decks.
- Outdoor fires of all types are banned in the area when the Virginia Department of Forestry has issued daily fire danger ratings of Class 3 (high) or higher, or before 4 pm during “fire season.” Nelson County and Augusta County may also issue a burning ban as can the Wintergreen Fire Department. [The Virginia Department of Forestry \(DOF\) weather and fuel conditions are monitored daily.](#)
- Owners who operate, or allow guests to operate, a non-compliant fire feature may be subject to violation penalties levied as additional assessments.
- Owners who operate, or allow guests to operate, a fire feature in violation of local or state fire codes may be subject to legal action.
- Property owners are responsible for guests. WPOA’s rules surrounding using an outdoor fire feature or similar device must be made available to all guests and posted at the property.
- Complaints regarding non-compliant fire features are handled by WPOA via inspections and compliance letters.
- Complaints regarding non-compliant fire pits which are in use and could pose a risk, are transferred immediately to the Wintergreen Fire Department. The fire department will extinguish non-compliant fires and notify WPOA and other agencies if warranted. In addition to being personally responsible for all actions resulting from a fire at your residence, and/or fire spreading to neighboring properties, the Virginia Department of Forestry will issue fines for forest fires started due to negligent fire practices. Property owners can also be billed for all costs related to suppression.



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