



# Northville Township Fire Department

41600 W. Six Mile Rd.  
Northville, MI 48168  
Phone: (248) 348-5807  
Fax: (248) 348-5840  
Email: [thughes@twp.northville.mi.us](mailto:thughes@twp.northville.mi.us)  
[northvillemich.com](http://northvillemich.com)

## Definitions

### **Bonfire**

Bonfires are permitted for ceremonial purposes only and require a permit, site inspection and fire department approval. Bonfires shall be a minimum of 50 feet from any structure or combustible material. Fire area must be surrounded by non-combustible materials to prevent the spread of fire to within 50 feet of a structure, i.e. stones, patio pavers, etc. (IFC def., 307.4.2). Conditions that can cause a fire to spread within 50 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition (IFC def., 307.4.2). Bonfires will be evaluated on a case by case basis in regards to the topography, type of event, location, number of attendees and other safety factors.

**Example:** Open fire not contained in a fire pit or fireplace. Total fuel area exceeds 3 feet in diameter by 2 feet in height.

**PERMIT REQUIRED**

### **Recreational fire**

A recreational fire is an outdoor fire that is not contained within an outdoor fireplace, outdoor fire pit, portable outdoor fireplace, or other enclosed container and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height. Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure of combustible material. Fire area must be surrounded by non-combustible materials to prevent the spread of fire to within 25 feet of a structure, i.e. stones, patio pavers, etc.. Conditions that could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition (IFC def., 307.4.2).

**Example:** Campfire or outdoor fire that is not contained within a fire pit or fireplace. The fire area must be surrounded by a non-combustible material to prevent the spread of fire, i.e. stones, etc. The total fuel area cannot exceed 3 feet in diameter by 2 feet in height.

**PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**



### **Portable outdoor fireplace (portable, solid-fuel burning)**

Portable outdoor fireplaces are defined as a portable, outdoor, solid-fuel burning fireplace that is constructed of a noncombustible material. These devices may have a small hearth opening, a chimney, or be open in design. Portable, outdoor, solid-fuel burning devices shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and be located a minimum of 15 feet from a structure or combustible material including buildings, decks, fences, etc. When operated at a one-and-two family dwelling the device must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and is not required to meet the 15 foot minimum requirement. Using these devices on a combustible surface is not recommended at any time.

**Examples:** Portable outdoor, solid-fuel burning devices include chimeneas, enclosed fire pits, fire pits on legs and other devices that are commercially manufactured and available to provide ambiance and warmth.

**PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**



**Portable outdoor fireplace (portable, fuel-gas fired)**

**PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**

Portable, fuel-gas fired outdoor fireplaces are similar to the definition and use provided for portable outdoor solid-fuel burning fireplaces with the exception of type of fuel used. Based on the similar hazards and uses of the devices, the same distance, location and clearance requirements must be met. Portable, outdoor, fuel-gas fired outdoor fireplaces shall be operated in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and be located a minimum of 15 feet from a structure or combustible material including buildings, decks, fences, etc. When operated at a one-and-two family dwelling the device must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and is not required to meet the 15 foot minimum requirement. Using these devices on a combustible surface is not recommended at any time.



**Examples:** Portable outdoor, fuel-gas fired devices include fire features that are primarily fueled by portable propane tanks. These devices include fire pits, chimneys, outdoor fireplaces, fire tables, etc.

**Outdoor fire pit (fixed location, solid fuel burning)**

**PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**

Fixed location, outdoor fire pits that burn solid fuel (wood) must be enclosed in a pit constructed of noncombustible materials where the total fuel size does not exceed 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height. Outdoor fire pits that meet these requirements must be located a minimum of 15 feet from any structure or combustible material including decks, fences, etc. When installed at one-and-two family homes the minimum clearance from structures or combustible materials may be reduced to 10 feet.

**Examples:** Fixed location, outdoor fire pits that burn solid fuel (wood) are small fires fully enclosed in a noncombustible pit. These devices are included as part of many landscape and outdoor entertainment areas and do not include devices designed as outdoor fireplaces such as those that burn solid wood and are constructed with a burn box, chimney, flue, etc.



**Outdoor fireplace (fixed location, solid fuel burning)**

**BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED**

Fixed location, outdoor fireplaces that burn solid fuel (wood) that include a burn box, chimney, flue, etc. must be in compliance with the Michigan Building Code (MBC), Michigan Residential Code (MRC), and the International Mechanical Code (IMC). All outdoor fireplaces require permits and approval by the Building Department.

**Examples:** Fixed location, outdoor fireplaces that burn solid fuel (wood) are permitted under the Michigan Building Code and require permits and inspections by the Building Department. These devices are constructed much like masonry fireplaces/chimneys in homes and must be permitted as an accessory structure.



**Outdoor fireplace or fire pit (fixed location, fuel-gas fired)** **BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED**

Fixed location, outdoor fireplaces and fire pits that utilize natural gas supplied via permanent piping must be permitted and approved by the Northville Township Building Department. The design, construction and installation of these fuel-fired appliances shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, the Michigan Building Code, the International Fuel Gas Code and the International Mechanical Code.



**Examples:** Fixed location, outdoor fireplaces and fire pits include both fireplaces and fire pits or fire features that utilize natural gas as their fuel source. These devices must be permitted and approved by the Building Department. These devices come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are used in many landscape and outdoor entrainment spaces.

**Prescribed burning** **PERMIT REQUIRED**

See **Prescribed Burning Regulations.**

**Patio heaters (portable outdoor gas-fired heating appliances)** **PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**

See **Patio Heater Regulations.**

**Outdoor grilling** **PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**

See **Outdoor Grilling Regulations.**

**Occupational use** **PERMIT NOT REQUIRED**

Occupational use fires include the burning of wood in a steel drum over which a supply of construction sand can be dumped and thawed. These types of fires must be enclosed in a noncombustible chamber such as a steel drum at all times. Occupational use fires must be kept at minimum of 15 feet from any structure or combustible material and follow-all of the above regulations.