

# Backyard Burning & Our Environment

MANAGING WASTE BETTER



**For further info, contact:**

The Environment Section  
Limerick County Council 061 496 264  
[www.limerickcoco.ie/environment](http://www.limerickcoco.ie/environment)

Create  
new ways  
to minimise  
waste



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# Backyard Burning & Our Environment

## A Burning Issue

Many house holders, businesses and farmers in our county are burning waste. Traditionally, this type of practice was a very common form of waste management, however it is no longer acceptable, as it poses a threat to our environment and health. 'Back-Yard Burning' largely covers any of the following activities:

- Burning household waste in a barrel or exposed pile in the yard or garden.
- Burning in a 'home or garden incinerator' purchased from a DIY centre.
- Burning of household waste in an open fire, range or other solid fuel appliance.
- Burning of commercial waste on business premises
- Burning of waste on building sites.

## Why not?

Any backyard fire will reach relatively low temperatures, receive little oxygen and produce a lot of smoke. Uncontrolled burning at low temperatures creates toxic and dangerous by-products, such as dioxins, which are not destroyed by the fire but become airborne on soot particles ultimately harmful to our health. Additionally, backyard burning is illegal. It is an offence under two different Acts:

### *Waste Management Act 1996*

- A person cannot dispose of waste in a manner that is likely to cause environmental pollution.

### *Air Pollution Act 1987*

- There is an obligation on the occupier of any premises, other than a private dwelling (this does not include a curtilage or garden), to prevent air pollution.
- The occupier of any premises shall not cause or permit any emission from such premises in such a quantity, or in such a manner, to be a nuisance.

## Healthy Environment - Healthy People

Correctly disposing of waste directly from your home or business bears a financial cost and some in our county are choosing to make cost savings by burning their waste. This shortsighted approach will lead to environmental and health related problems in the long run. For example, burning painted wood can emit lead-laden fumes, which bystanders can inhale. Or burning plastics, which contain Polyvinylchlorides (PVCs) release carbon monoxide, dioxins and chlorinated furans when burned; these are highly toxic, cancer causing substances.

Exposure to backyard burning can cause anything from sore eyes to headaches, dizziness, nausea and longer-term effects such as bronchitis, emphysema and an increase in the risk of developing cancer as a result of continuous exposure. Vegetation in close proximity to backyard burning will also suffer; this can range from damage to leaves and branches (on the small end of the scale) to completely destroying large tracts of vegetation. There is also the danger that uncontrolled burning can cause immense damage in wooded or forest areas.

## The solution

The solution to protecting the environment and your health from the dangers of backyard burning is to simply not burn waste.

If you have concerns about waste disposal costs, look at the waste you create and take steps to reduce, reuse and recycle it. For example, you can:

- Avoid over-packaged products & choose packaging which can be recycled.
- Separate your waste and take recyclable waste to one of the council's 47 bring centres.
- Compost organic waste, which will save you money and improve your garden.
- Contact the Environment Section for advice and assistance on waste minimisation.
- Only use waste disposal contractors who have a waste collection permit.

Log onto [www.limerickcoco.ie/environment](http://www.limerickcoco.ie/environment) for a full listing.

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**Remember! Backyard Burning is dangerous & illegal - protect your health and avoid heavy penalties by not burning waste.**

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