

GBHA Fire Safety (open pits)

Effective, immediately all open fire pits must be removed from GBHA properties. Only contained burners (fire bowl, hearth) are allowed however must be of a distance of more than 25ft from the building and also 25ft from the tree line.

Resident must follow the Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection for recreational fire pits policy (Recreational Fires, Fire Pits, Chimineas Info). All current family residents will receive this information as well as new move-ins.

Tina Danzy, Executive Director

Board Approval 6/17/2020

*Great Barrington Housing Authority
2 Bernard Gibbons Drive
Great Barrington, MA 01230
413-274-1142 – phone
413-274-1143 – fax
gtbarringtonhousingauthority@gmail.com*

Fire Pit Safety-Change in Policy

July 1, 2020

Dear Family Residents:

Please note the following new policy now in effect:

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If you should happen to have an "open fire pit" it will need to be removed and disassembled immediately as only contained burners will be allowed going forward. GBHA staff will be enforcing this new policy and will be inspect the grounds for compliance. A fee for non-compliance may be applied.

Thank you for your cooperation on this matter as your safety is our primary concern.

Sincerely,

Tina Danzy
Executive Housing Director

Recreational Fires, Fire Pits, Chimineas



At single family dwellings, there are no special permits required in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the use of outdoor fire pits, cooking, or recreational fires.

THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS OPEN BURNING

There are however, several requirements based on Department of Environmental Protection regulations (D.E.P.), the Massachusetts State Fire Laws & Codes (MGL Chapter 148 & 527 CMR), and the 2009 International Fire Code (IFC):

ALL FIRES MUST BE PRIMARILY USED FOR
COOKING PER 527 CMR, MGL 48, AND THE
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1. The fire must be small and manageable, no greater than 3 feet in diameter. By definition, a fire larger than 3 feet in diameter is no longer considered a cooking or recreational fire. (IFC)
2. All fires must be constantly attended. (IFC)
3. It is required to keep a fire extinguisher, garden hose, or water bucket available for quick extinguishment if necessary. (IFC)
4. Fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible materials. (IFC)
5. The fire pit should be placed on a flat, noncombustible surface. An area of 25 feet should be cleared around the fire pit in all directions, and clear of all dry vegetation and combustibles. Make sure the fire pit is placed away from other materials that could burn or catch fire, both overhead and to the

sides such as building components, tree limbs, sheds, awnings, etc. (IFC)

6. Fire pits and recreational fires ARE NOT INCINERATORS. The burning of trash, rubbish, painted or stained wood and construction debris is prohibited by D.E.P.

7. Do not cause a nuisance or health hazard to your neighbors. Never use wet or damp wood. This creates needless, irritating smoke. Always use dry seasoned wood, charcoal, or specialist fuel (e.g. wood burning briquettes). If the Great Barrington Fire Department receives complaints from neighbors that the smoke or smell is bothersome, we will investigate, and if deemed necessary, you may be instructed to extinguish the fire. (MGL Chapter 148)

8. Never use an accelerant to light any fire. There have been many cases of people getting burned while trying to light a fire with a "small amount" of gasoline.