

Residential Trash Burning Prohibited

<u>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:</u>	CONTACT: Charles Knox	NH DES 271-3710
MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2002	Rick Rumba	NHDES 271-1987

New State Law Prohibits Residential Trash Burning

Effective January 1, 2003

Concord, NH As the new year begins, a new statewide law prohibiting the residential burning of household trash becomes effective. The intent of the law is to reduce public health risks associated with the backyard burning of household trash.

Today's household trash contains inks, dyes, chlorine, plastics, toxic metals and a variety of synthetic materials that can produce toxins when burned. The fire in a backyard burn barrel, on-site incinerator, fireplace or woodstove does not get hot enough to destroy these poisonous substances. As a result, many hazardous pollutants, including dioxin, are released in the smoke in a concentrated form close to the ground where they are easily inhaled. According to tests conducted by EPA, a week's worth of trash from a single home burned in an open barrel can emit as much dioxin and other toxic chemicals into the air as a well-controlled municipal incinerator burning trash from thousands of homes!

The ban, effective on January 1st, prohibits burning household trash, including packaging materials, coated or laminated papers, rubber, painted or treated wood, coated or treated cardboard, oily rags, and animal, vegetable, and kitchen waste. The ban does not prohibit the outdoor burning of clean wood, leaves and small brush, campfire wood and charcoal, if authorized by the local forest fire warden.

"Recent data gathered by the N.H. Department of Environmental Services shows that there are currently well over 6,000 backyard burn barrels used in New Hampshire. Collectively, burn barrels are the states 3rd largest source of dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known," noted Rick Rumba, DES Air Toxics and Environmental Health Program Manager. "The purpose of this new law is to reduce the risk of cancer, birth defects and other health problems created by dioxin and other toxic substances released during backyard burning."

DES and the N.H. Department of Resources and Economic Development have been conducting an outreach campaign for the past year to inform New Hampshire citizens of the new law. Forest fire wardens and town officials across the state are distributing informational brochures to their residents and displaying posters in highly visible locations including town halls, fire stations and solid waste transfer stations. The brochure, "Open Burning of Residential Trash," is available by calling (800) 498 - 6868 or can be downloaded at [DES Website](#). Information on fire permits, proper solid waste management, and better disposal alternatives such as recycling and composting is also available at the website or by calling the toll free number.

For more information on the new law, contact DES at 800-498-6868 or 603-271-1370.