

# Prescribed Burning in New Jersey

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A Procedure and Application  
Guide for Private  
Landowners:

## Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burns

**NOTE: Use this application if you are planning to implement a prescribed burn yourself, which includes landowners or lessees and their employees and/or designated agents who are conducting burns on the landowners' properties and are not for hire qualified professionals. If you wish to request the services of the New Jersey Forest Fire Service to plan and implement a prescribed burn or hire a qualified professional other than the NJFFS use the applications titled: Forest Fire Service-Implemented Prescribed Burns or Qualified Professionals-Implemented Prescribed Burns**



State of New Jersey  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Forest Fire Service



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**Section I. When should a private landowner undertake prescribed burning?**

Prescribed burning can be a safe and cost-effective method of reducing fuels, vegetation and leaf litter that could contribute to a wildfire across a broad landscape. Private forest landowners or lessees (also known as “applicants” or “applicant”) should consider whether prescribed burning could be used as a management tool to reduce fuels if:

- There exists a heavy fuels accumulation and the woodland is vulnerable to wildland fire; and
- The burn will help to reduce wildfire risk.

However, no applicant should employ prescribed burning as a land management tool if:

- Such burning is prohibited by local ordinance;
- The applicant lacks the resources and skills necessary to carry out and complete the burn safely;  
or
- The potential burn site is not accessible to fire vehicles and equipment.

NJ Department of Environmental Protection’s Air Quality regulations, at N.J. A. C. 7:27-2, define the Control and Prohibition of Open Burning. Permits are required to conduct prescribed burning and are obtained from NJ Forest Fire Service. There are three options an applicant can chose to implement a prescribed burn on the applicant’s property:

- Obtain a permit to implement him or herself
- Request the services of the NJ Forest Fire Service (FFS) staff
- Hire a qualified professional

**Note. This application procedure and guide is intended for applicants who wish to implement the prescribed burn him or herself and is described as a “Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn Application.” “Landowners” includes landowners or lessees and their employees and/or designated agents who are conducting burns on the landowners’ properties and are not for hire qualified professionals.**



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## Section II. Prescribed Burning Permits: Application Procedure

To apply for a prescribed burning permit:

- “Landowners” includes landowners or lessees and their employees and/or designated agents who are conducting burns on the landowners’ properties can apply for the permit. Responsibility for the proper conduct of the burn resides with the applicant.
- Complete an application (Section III, Appendices A,B & D) and send to one of the three FFS Division field offices (Appendix E) at **least 30 days prior** to the proposed activity for Landowner Implemented Prescribed Burns.
- There is no fee associated with applying for a permit.

### Landowner- Implemented Prescribed Burns

To apply for a Landowner (or Lessee)-Implemented Prescribed Burn Permit where the applicant does not require assistance with the prescribed burn, the applicant shall apply, no less than thirty (30) days prior to the prescribed burn:

- a. Check local ordinances for restrictions on open burning;
- b. Prepare the application form (Section III) and the Prescribed Burn Plan (see Appendix B);
- c. Provide documentation that the applicant has and/or meets the prescribed burning training and experience requirements (see Appendix C ); and
- d. Submit the completed application form, together with the Prescribed Burn Plan, and the documentation of training and experience form (Appendix D) to the appropriate Division Office (see Appendix E).

## Section III. Prescribed Burn Procedures and Requirements

### 1. Checklists for Conducting a Prescribed Burn

#### A. Preparation and Submittal of the Permit Application

- Municipal codes have been reviewed to ensure that they do not prohibit open burning, and, if burning is allowed, whether there are any applicable restrictions.
- The Prescribed Burn Application Form has been completed and signed by the applicant.
- A Prescribed Burn Plan has been completed according to the guidelines in Appendix B.



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- Documentation that shows that the applicant has prior prescribed burn experience and/or meets the applicable prescribed burn training and experience requirements set forth in Appendix C.
- The completed Prescribed Burn Application Form, together with all supporting documentation, has been submitted to the appropriate FFS Division Field Office no later than **at least 30 days prior** to any proposed activity for a Landowner Implemented Prescribed Burn.

**B. Before Proceeding with the Burn**

- Obtain an approved prescribed burn permit from the FFS.
- Ensure that any necessary control lines are plowed or otherwise prepared, and that the lines surround all areas to be burned with either natural or man-made fire breaks sufficient to prevent the escape of fire from the designated area.
- Notify the Section Forest Firewarden and local police and fire or other notification required in the Prescribed Burn Permit, within 24 hours prior to implementing the burn.
- Supply fire suppression equipment and personnel to ensure that the fire does not escape firebreaks.

**C. On the Day the Burn is Conducted**

- The applicant must be present on the burn site on the day of the burn.
- Go/No Go decision: The applicant must contact the FFS permit issuing office for a final determination that no meteorological or other factors make it necessary to revoke the permit and confirm that the burn may proceed.
- The fire suppression equipment and personnel necessary to ensure that the fire does not escape firebreaks must be present on the burn site on the day of the burn.
- A copy of the approved prescribed burn permit and the prescribed burn plan must be present and available at the burn site on the day of the burn.

**D. After the Burn is Completed**

- The applicant must provide the Prescribed Burn Report to the Division Office no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>. At a minimum the Report shall include:
  - the name and contact information for the applicant or qualified professional involved in conducting the burn
  - the address or Block and Lot of the property where the burn was conducted
  - a map of the area(s) burned
  - the approximate number of acres burned
  - the date the burn was completed
  - if any injuries occurred or property was damaged during the conduct of the burn, and a description of those injuries or damage
  - a Report must be provided to FFS even if no burn was conducted during the permit year



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## 2. Technical Assistance from FFS

If requested by the applicant, the FFS may provide, **based upon available resources**, assistance to an applicant to guide the applicant in the development of a Prescribed Burn Plan for the safe and effective conduct of prescribed burning activities. This type of assistance is:

**Technical Assistance:** This is provided to an applicant to ensure the prescribed burn application is in compliance with the requirements explained in this document and in accordance with safe burning practices. The FFS's technical assistance will include aid in the preparation of the prescribed burn plan, and a site visit, if necessary, as part of the planning process.



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Section for Official Use Only (NJFFS)      Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn Application Form**

APPLICANT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**Prescribed Burn Project Location and Acres**

LOCATION (Property where prescribed burning is to be completed):

COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

TOWNSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS or BLOCK AND LOT (specific location) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ACREAGE TO BE BURNED (to nearest half-acre) \_\_\_\_\_

- Check box if you need FFS Technical Assistance for the development of a Prescribed Burn Plan only, which is based on available resources

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Mail or Deliver the completed forms to the appropriate FFS Division Office (see Appendix E)



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**APPENDICES**

**Prescribed Burning in New Jersey**

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1. APPENDIX A: Prescribed Burn Permit Conditions
2. APPENDIX B: Prescribed Burn Plan
3. APPENDIX C: Training and Experience Recommendations
4. APPENDIX D: Certification of Training Form for a Landowner/Lessee or designated Agent
4. APPENDIX E: Forest Fire Service Field Office Locations



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**APPENDIX A: Prescribed Burn Permit Conditions**





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<b>OFFICIAL USE ONLY SECTION (NJFFS)</b>	DIVISION: _____ SECTION: _____
<b>PRESCRIBED BURNING PERMIT</b>	
PERMIT NO.: _____ DATE PERMIT ISSUED: _____ NOT VALID AFTER: _____	
APPLICANT NAME: _____	
PARCEL NAME/LOCATION: _____	
SECTION FIREWARDEN INSPECTION COMPLETED: _____ DATE: _____	
DIVISION/ASSISTANT DIV. FIREWARDEN _____ DATE: _____	
REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS: _____	
_____	

**Prescribed Burn Permit and Conditions**

No burning may commence unless: The applicant notifies the local FFS Division Office on the State business day prior to the scheduled date of the burn and receives verbal approval from the FFS to go ahead with the burn.

- Such notification must be made within 24 hours of the planned burn, during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. In case of a weekend or holiday, the notification must occur on the last business day before the holiday or weekend for the permit to be valid.
- Upon notification, the local FFS Division Office will determine whether any meteorological factors or the availability of resources makes it necessary to revoke the permit to burn. The applicant **MUST** receive authorization to proceed from FFS before conducting a prescribed burn.
- The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Prescribed Burn Permit and the day's fire weather forecast issued by the National Weather Service are available to the person conducting the burn, on the day of the burn, and the permit and forecast are available for inspection.
- The burn may not commence until the required notifications have been made (see "REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS", above).
- Permits are nontransferable.
- A permit issued by the FFS does not authorize the burning for the disposal of rubbish, garbage, trade waste or building materials by open burning. Only natural vegetation including herbaceous and woody plant material may be burned for the prevention and control of wildfire.
- The applicant is responsible for compliance with the permit and its conditions, for the burn, and the actions of any person conducting the burn.
- The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the fire is attended at all times and that the burn is complete and 100 percent contained before the person responsible for conducting the burn and the fire suppression equipment and personnel leave the property.
- The applicant shall ensure that the burn is carried out in accordance with the prescribed burn plan approved by the FFS.
- Additional conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE BURN WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE ABOVE CONDITIONS:

APPLICANT NAME (PRINTED): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: This permit does not authorize burning that will violate the New Jersey Air Pollution Control Code, New Jersey Uniform Fire Code, or the Forest Fire Prevention and Control Act. Violators are subject to fines up to \$5,000.00 and revocation of the prescribed burning permit.



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**APPENDIX B: Prescribed Burn Plan**



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**Prescribed Burn Plan**

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A prescribed burn must be carried out in accordance with an approved Prescribed Burn Plan. Any burn conducted in a manner that is not in full compliance with the approved plan is a violation and subject to revocation of the prescribed burning permit. New Jersey's prescribed burning season is limited to the period between October 15 and March 15. The period may be adjusted by the FFS depending on weather and other factors.

Planning considerations include:

- the size of the area to be treated. Larger areas may be more economical to treat than smaller areas;
- ranges of preferred weather conditions (wind, temperature, relative humidity);
- smoke management considerations such as developed areas and roads that may be impacted;
- burning techniques, equipment and personnel needs, emergency suppression procedures, permit requirements and notification procedures.

At a minimum a prescribed burn plan must include:

- identification of the property where the burn is to be carried out, the purpose and objective of the burn;
- a map of the area to be burned;
- a list of the equipment to be used in carrying out the burn;
- a list of the personnel and the roles and specific duties assigned to each person; the range of desired meteorological conditions (temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity) under which the burn will be conducted;
- description of the fuel loads of the burn site(s);
- the overstory and understory type at each burn location;
- the firing techniques that will be used;
- the season and time of day the burn will be carried out;
- the type and location of existing or predetermined control lines and the site preparation to be carried out prior to the burn;
- identification of the officials to be notified a day prior to the burn and the officials' phone numbers;
- adjacent areas with smoke sensitive populations and the distances to each;
- and the control and mop-up procedures to be followed.

For specific instructions and an explanation as to how to complete each section of this Prescribed Burn Plan Form, see the *Guidelines* below.



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**Prescribed Burn Plan Form**

1. Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Tract Location (specific site location of burn): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Plan Preparer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Burn Area Description:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Resource Needs:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Weather:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Mop Up:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Burn Completion:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Maps:

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved By: (Landowner/Lessee) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Section for Official Use Only (NJFFS)</i>	
<u>Approved By:</u> (Division Forest Firewarden) _____	<u>Date:</u> _____
Valid until: _____	



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## **Prescribed Burn Plan Guidelines to Aid the Applicant in Preparation of the Plan**

### **1. Applicant**

Include the name and address of the applicant. If the applicant is an organization, include the organization's name and the name of its designated agent. The designated agent signs the permit application and prescribed burn plan on behalf of the organization. Provide contact information for the applicant or designated agent, including a phone number. If an organization owns the land, include the name of the applicant's designated agent on the second line beneath "Applicant".

### **2. Tract Location**

Provide a description of the physical location of the burn site(s). Include county(ies), municipality(ies), block (s) and lot (s), roads, landmarks, and other known features of the landscape that would help to identify the burn site(s) on a map. If the burn site(s) is (are) located in more than one municipality and/or county, identify all the municipalities and counties in this section.

### **3. Plan Preparer**

Provide the name and contact information for the plan's preparer. The preparer must be the person conducting the burn. Cite the plan preparer's relevant training and experience in conducting and carrying out prescribed burns. The minimum training and experience criteria are listed in Appendix C.

### **4. Burn Area Description**

Describe the areas to be burned and the extent to which they are surrounded by either man-made or natural barriers such as firebreaks or other barriers sufficient to prevent the escape of fire from the burn site under reasonably foreseeable conditions.

Describe the fuels (i.e. natural vegetation including herbaceous and woody plant material) present at each burn site. This should be a representative description of the fuels found across the burn site. If there are different fuel types across the tract, give a general description of each, and diagram the general locations of each on the map(s) which must be included under #9. Maps. Explain how the fire will be used as a tool at each burn site to prevent and control wildfire. Provide a summary of the desired outcomes of the burn as an objective for each burn site.

### **5. Resource Needs**

List the resources (tractors, water sources, personnel, etc.) that will be required to conduct the prescribed burn. Additional resources may be used but must be identified as optional resources. If the applicant/preparer lists resources here, these resources shall be available on the day of the burn.



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Water supplies must be carefully considered when considering the resources required to conduct a prescribed burn. If water tenders (tanker vehicles specialized for firefighting) are anticipated to be the primary source of additional water during the burn, indicate this on the form and identify where the tenders will be able to refill.

Describe the fire control techniques and methods that will be employed. This may include strip firing, backing fire, and spot ignitions as well as ground ignition techniques. In many cases, ground ignition-backing fire is the preferred method; however, other techniques may be used.

Identify any areas with smoke sensitive populations in the vicinity of the burn site(s) that are within range of the burn's smoke emissions, and document any measures taken to mitigate the impact.

The ventilation factor prevailing at the time when the burn is conducted significantly influences the range that smoke will travel. The ventilation factor is determined by multiplying the mixing height in feet by the transport wind speed in mph. These predictions may be found in the National Weather Service's fire weather forecast. This forecast may be accessed through the websites of either the Mount Holly or New York Forecast Office. The National Weather Service forecasts for the majority of the State are covered by the Mount Holly office: [www.weather.gov/phi/](http://www.weather.gov/phi/), or the New York office: [www.weather.gov/okx/](http://www.weather.gov/okx/). The fire weather forecast can be found through the link labeled "Forecasts" above the map on the website.

Describe any special precautions that will be employed to ensure that the burn is conducted in a safe, successful, and satisfactory manner.

## 6. Weather

Specify the range of weather conditions that is necessary to produce the fireline intensity to achieve the resource management objectives. These minimum requirements include: transport winds of at least 10 mph, mixing height in excess of 1,600 feet, and smoke dispersion of at least "moderate".

Confirm that no burning will occur if the New Jersey Division of Air Quality rating is less than "MODERATE" for the day of the burn. These daily air quality readings may be accessed at either the FFS website: [www.njwildfire.org](http://www.njwildfire.org) or at the DEP site: [www.njaqinow.net](http://www.njaqinow.net).

Recommended optimal parameters for prescribed burning:

- Time of year: October 15 to March 15
- Air Temperature: 0° – 60°
- Best Steady Wind : NW, W , SW, N, S or any wind that will mitigate smoke sensitive areas
- Best Steady Wind Velocity : 3 – 20 mph
- Relative Humidity : 30% to 60%



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7. Mop Up

Indicate the mop up procedures that will be employed at the conclusion of the burn.

8. Burn Completion

After a prescribed burn is completed, the applicant or the preparer shall contact the local FFS Division Office during regular business hours and provide a short verbal report on the prescribed burn. This must include, but need not be limited to, the location of the burn, the burn permit number, the date(s) of burn, and the number of acres burned.

9. Maps

Attach maps of the proposed burn site(s), including fuelbreaks, firebreaks, water points, escape routes, etc.

10. Approvals

Sign and date the Plan. Ensure your plan is submitted for review with the permit application, for approval by the FFS. The approval of plans by FFS shall be made within the sole discretion of the FFS.



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### **Appendix C: Training and Experience Recommendations**

The applicant responsible for the prescribed burn shall provide documentation of his/her training and experience. FFS strongly recommends that applicants obtain the minimum training and experience standards described below.

If an applicant with prior prescribed burning experience is administering the burn, the applicant must provide documentation of his/her experience. If an applicant with no prior prescribed burning experience is administering the burn, FFS strongly recommends that he/she meet the criteria outlined below.

FFS recommends that landowners/lessees/employees/designated agents have the following minimum training and experience prior to performing a burn under a Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn permit:

1. Training: successfully complete a prescribed burning workshop held by the FFS.
2. Experience: supervise and/or participate in at least three prescribed burns on lands with a similar fuel type as the property.

In addition to documenting that the minimum recommendations are met, the individual responsible for conducting the proposed prescribed burn must submit a Certification of Training Form that documents his/her training and experience.





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**APPENDIX D: Certification of Training Form for a Landowner/Lessee or designated Agent**

I, (Landowner/Lessee or designated agent Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

State of: \_\_\_\_\_

Being an Employee of

Company Name (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Am knowledgeable concerning the work experience and qualifications of the Prescribed Burn recommendations; and I do hereby declare that I meet the recommended standard that qualifies for such certification by having met the following requirements:

1. has supervised and/or conducted a minimum of three successful prescribed burns in New Jersey, in a similar fuel type, within the last 5 years.

Training and Experience (attach additional pages if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the foregoing training information provided by me is true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing information provided by me is willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Appendix E: Forest Fire Service Field Office Locations**

**Division A Headquarters**

240 Main St, Andover, NJ 07821  
(973) 786-6350

Counties covered:

Bergen, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Morris,  
Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Warren,  
Hopewell Township-Mercer County, Middlesex County north of the Raritan River

**Division B Headquarters**

PO Box 239  
Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, Route 72, Mile #1  
New Lisbon, NJ 08064  
(609) 726-9010

Counties covered:

Burlington, Monmouth, Ocean, and Middlesex south of the Raritan River, Mercer County except  
Hopewell Township

**Division C Headquarters**

5555 Atlantic Ave.  
Mays Landing, NJ 08330  
(609) 625-1121

Counties covered:

Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland,  
Gloucester, and Salem.