

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW FIRE DEPARTMENT/ BOARD OF HEALTH
Guidelines for Operation of
Chimineas, Fire Pits, and Outdoor Fireplaces
June, 2010

These outdoor wood-burning devices have gained in popularity over the past several years. These devices come in many shapes and sizes and materials (e.g. brick, metals, or ceramics). For the purposes of these guidelines, "fire pit" includes below ground pits, freestanding fireplaces, and portable devices intended to contain and control outdoor fires

In order to prevent fire hazards and minimize nuisance conditions injurious to the public health, the Longmeadow Fire Department and the Longmeadow Board of Health have developed these recommended procedures. The operation of these devices should conform both to manufacturers' recommendations and the following guidelines:

- Only natural firewood/commercial logs should be burned.
 - Burning of lumber, pellets, scrap wood, tree trimmings, leaves, yard waste, paper, cardboard, garbage and similar items should be avoided. Burning of treated wood, refuse or garbage or rubber items emits toxic gases, and poses significant health risks.
- All fire pits should be located away from any structure or combustible material.
 - Belowground fire pits and freestanding fireplaces should be located a minimum of 25 feet away from any structure or combustible material (or further if recommended by the manufacturer).
 - Portable fire pits should be located a minimum of 15 feet away from any structure or combustible material (or further if recommended by the manufacturer).
 - Avoid overhead obstructions of any kind while in operation. (Obstructions include, but are not limited to: roofs, ceilings, decks, porches, overhangs, tree branches, clothesline, tents, etc.)
 - A significant risk of fire exists if placed on porches, roofs, balconies, or near any flammable or combustible material. This situation should be avoided.
- The fire in such devices must be constantly attended and supervised until the fire has been completely extinguished.
- A portable fire extinguisher or other approved extinguishing equipment, such as a garden hose, should be readily available
- Avoid burning these devices in windy weather conditions
- Avoid burning these devices at low temperatures. A smoldering fire is indicative of inefficient combustion. The excess smoke created can be irritating to the operator of the device or to neighbors; individuals with chronic pulmonary conditions are particularly affected by the smoke created by smoldering fires.
- Avoid burning when there are atmospheric conditions, such as air inversions, which prevent smoke from escaping to the upper atmosphere. The trapping of smoke close to the ground tends to cause odor nuisance conditions.
- Because of nighttime atmospheric conditions and to avoid irritable smoke conditions, operation of these devices between 11P.M. and 7:00A.M. should be avoided.