

# Forest Preserve District of Cook County

## **BRUSHPILE BURNING REGULATIONS**

### **VOLUNTEER TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS**

- **Site Steward:** Volunteer leader designated by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (hereafter FPDCC or District) to oversee ecosystem management performed by volunteers on a particular District site.
- **Master Steward (MS):** Volunteer leader, trained and certified by the District to supervise, in place of District staff, certain activities (brush-cutting, herbiciding, and brushpile burning) performed by volunteers on ecosystem management sites.
- **Brushpile Burn Leader (BBL):** Volunteer (or FPDCC staff) with the requisite fireline training and experience to supervise a brushpile burn. Usually, a Master Steward.
- **Workday Leader:** Volunteer in charge of activities during a particular workday. Usually, the Site Steward.

*The same person may have the qualifications to perform all of the above functions or they may be divided amongst several individuals.*

### **PERSONNEL & EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

1. Minimum brushpile burn crew is two people during periods of low fire danger.
2. Brushpile Burn Leader and crew members must wear heavy leather gloves and leather workboots as well as non-flammable clothing. It is recommended that approved personal safety equipment such as Nomex or Indura coveralls, fire helmet, and eye protection also be worn. If these additional items are not worn, they must be on site, close at hand.
3. Minimum equipment (for one brushpile) is a long-handled fire rake, a flapper, and a filled back-pack water sprayer.
4. Additional and site-specific requirements are listed on the site burn plan.

### **BRUSHPILE BURNING PROTOCOL**

1. Site Steward or other appropriate workday leader contacts FPDCC Volunteer Coordinator for permission to burn brushpiles on a specific workday.
  - Such requests must be submitted to the offices of the Volunteer Resources Section by the Wednesday noon preceding a weekend workday and at least two days in advance of a prospective weekday brushpile burn.
  - Requests may be made via phone directly to either the Volunteer Coordinator or the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator, by fax addressed to both of the above, or by email to both of the above.
  - Brushpile burns are not to occur unless a positive response is received from either the Volunteer Coordinator or the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator.

2. Volunteer Coordinator reviews site burn plan, verifies all required permits, ascertains that the proper FPDCC employee or volunteer Master Steward will be present during the brushpile burn, and determines that a qualified Brushpile Burn Leader will be present and in charge of burning brushpiles.
3. Brushpile burning will only be conducted within the parameters of all State, County, District and local regulations.
4. Workday Leader or other assigned individual(s) makes all phone calls and notifications required in advance of brushpile burn as specified in the approved site burn plan, and records all persons contacted with date and time of contact.
5. Workday Leader carries a copy of all applicable permits and the site burn plan.
6. Workday Leader and/or Brushpile Burn Leader conducts pre-brushpile burn site inspection to inspect fire breaks, safety hazards and review required environmental parameters.
7. Brushpile Burn Leader assigns brushpile burn crew.
8. Workday Leader, Brushpile Burn Leader and crew members must understand and accept their responsibilities before participating in brushpile burning and signing in on the appropriate sign-in sheet.
9. The use of accelerants will be minimized.
10. Burning brushpiles must be attended as long as there are active flames. The piles must be reduced to embers, all borders raked clear of debris and flammable materials and embers scattered within the perimeter so as to preclude flame-up before the burn crews are permitted to leave.
11. Before leaving the site, Brushpile Burn Leader and/or Master Steward or District staff person ensures that burned brushpiles are safe.
12. Workday Leader or assigned individual(s) makes all phone calls and notifications required after completion of the brushpile burn as specified in the approved site burn plan, and records all persons contacted with date and time of contact.
13. Workday Leader completes workday report form and attaches appropriate form that includes documented contacts.