



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## Student Involvement & Leadership Development

*Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management*

# RECREATIONAL FIRE & BONFIRE POLICY

Student Involvement & Leadership Development  
Campus Life Building, Room 150  
815-753-1421

### Open Burning Safety Policy:

When an open burning event is planned on NIU property, a safety review of the plans must be conducted. Responsibility for conducting the open burning event and the safety of the participants, spectators, and others will be with the sponsoring organization. The review by NIU will be to assist the sponsor in carrying out their responsibilities. Safety reviews can be conducted for open burning events held off-campus at the discretion of the sponsoring organization.

### Purpose:

This document provides general guidelines for procedures for those who plan to have open burning as part of an NIU event.

### Definition(s):

**Open Burning** – Any outdoor event that an amount of natural combustible material is ignited and allowed to burn.

**Wood** – Parts of a tree which would include: tree limbs, branches, trunks, less the 6 inches in diameter and three (3) feet long. Pallets, treated and non-treated construction lumber should **NOT** be considered wood as related to this policy.

**Recreational Fire** – A fire ignited and allowed to burn on a pile of wood no larger than three (3) feet in diameter and three (3) feet high.

**Bonfire** – A fire ignited and allowed to burn on a pile of wood no larger than twelve (12) feet in diameter and ten (10) feet in height.

### Recreational Fire Procedure:

The following procedure should be followed and viewed as a checklist to assist in attaining the goal of a safe and successful recreational fire event.

1. Organization should reserve the East Lagoon by filling out the Outdoor Facilities Requisition Form and submitting it to the Holmes Student Center – Huskie Den office, located in the Holmes Student Center Basement.
2. Organization must pick up a safety bucket from the Huskies Den for purposes of extinguishing the fire using water from the Lagoon.
3. The user organization is fully responsible for extinguishing the fire at the conclusion of the event and returning the bucket to the Huskies Den within 24 hours of the event.

### General Rules for Recreational Fires

- “Open Burning” permits do not need to be obtained from the DeKalb Fire Department for recreational fires.
- Only clean, untreated or unpainted wood can be used as fuel for the fire. Paper can be used for purposes of igniting the fire. No accelerants (i.e. gasoline, diesel, etc.) can be used to ignite or sustain the fire.
- All recreational fires are to be placed in the burn pit at the East Lagoon. Other locations may be used with pre-approval of NIU Environmental Health & Safety and NIU Grounds Superintendent.

- DeKalb Fire Department, NIU Public Safety, or NIU Environmental Health & Safety can/will make safety based decision to extinguish any fire deemed unsafe or hazardous.
- No fire shall be constructed during prolonged dry periods.
- Organization will be responsible for all incidents of damage or injuries related to the bonfire. The group will be responsible for all costs incurred if Grounds or the DeKalb Fire Department has to be called out.

**Bonfire Procedure:**

The following procedure should be followed and viewed as a checklist to assist in attaining the goal of a safe and successful bonfire event.

1. A responsible party with the organization should initiate contact to advise of intent with:
  - DeKalb Fire Department, Fire Prevention (**only contact fire department for Bonfire events**)
  - NIU Public Safety
  - NIU Environmental Health and Safety
  - Grounds
  - Parking
2. Obtain “open burning” permit application from DeKalb Fire Department, 700 Pine St. DeKalb, IL. 60115. Application must be submitted for approval at least 3 weeks prior to event. Open burning permit is not required for recreational fire event.
3. Meet with NIU Public Safety (NIU Police) to determine security needs at least three weeks prior to event.
4. Submit plan of action, site drawing, and copy of completed open burning application to NIU Environmental Health & Safety for review/approval at least 2 weeks prior to event.
5. Request/Confirm with Parking if using parking lot(s) in any way at least 2 weeks prior to event.
6. Confirm Grounds’ ability to provide fuel (wood), set up, and clean up site on planned date at least one week prior to event.
7. Confirm Fire Department will be “on site” or “in service” at least one week prior to event. Costs may be associated with having the DeKalb Fire Department on site.

**General Rules for Bonfires:**

- All requests for burning permits (bonfires) shall go through DeKalb Fire Department.
- All bonfires will be in locations approved by NIU Public Safety, DeKalb Fire Department, and NIU Environmental Health & Safety.
- All bonfires must be contained in an approved manner.
- Grounds will be responsible for building all bonfires. Only wood supplied by Grounds is to be used. When the wood made available by Grounds is gone, the fire should be allowed to go out or be extinguished. *No outside wood or flammable is to be used to prolong the fire.*
- DeKalb Fire Department, NIU Public Safety, or NIU Environmental Health & Safety can/will make safety based decision to extinguish any fire deemed unsafe or hazardous.
- No fire shall be constructed during prolonged dry periods.
- Organization will be responsible for all incidents of damage or injuries related to the bonfire.

**Contact Information:**

NIU Holmes Student Center Huskies Den .....815-753-1421  
 NIU Environmental Health and Safety .....815-753-0404  
 NIU Public Safety .....815-753-1212

NIU Grounds .....815-753-1479  
NIU Parking .....815-753-1045  
DeKalb Fire Department .....815-748-8460

Revised 8/15