

Demolition of Structures by Burning

Demolishing structures (e.g. buildings, houses, cabins, sheds) by burning may release toxic contaminants into the air that can cause harm to human health and the environment. Yukon's *Air Emissions Regulations* state that a permit is required to open burn more than 5kg of solid waste – effectively, an air emissions permit is needed prior to burning a structure.

Environment Yukon will consider issuing a permit to burn a structure in the following circumstances:

- 1) when there is no reasonable alternative method of demolishing the structure; or
- 2) if the structure is to be burned as part of a training exercise by a fire department; and
- 3) after an assessment has been conducted under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA)*, if required (see below).

No Reasonable Alternative

If there is no reasonable alternative method for demolition, the owner of the property can apply for a permit to burn the structure. Environment Yukon will determine whether there is a reasonable alternative by considering the potential environmental and public health adverse effects of different demolition options when assessing the permit application.

Fire Department Burns

If there is a reasonable way to dispose of the structure other than by burning (e.g., tearing down and landfilling), the owner can still apply for a permit to burn it as long as a fire department agrees to burn the structure for training purposes. The fire department will consider such factors as the age of the building, the number of stories, and the condition of the building when choosing whether to use the structure for live fire training. In this case, the fire department must agree to burn the structure for training purposes before the Government of Yukon will issue a permit.

The fire department may revoke its agreement to burn the structure at any time and for any reason. This could occur if the building is not in the same condition as initially implied, there is no need for firefighting training, or the weather conditions are not favourable for burning. Regardless of the circumstances, the permittee is not authorized to burn the structure unless it is being burned by the fire department.

YESAA Assessment

A YESAA assessment is required prior to burning a structure if the mass of solid waste to be burned is 50 kg or more, unless the following criteria are met:

1. the floor area of the structure is less than 1000 m²;
2. the burn is not being carried out within 30 m of another building;
3. the burn is not being carried out in, on or within 30 m of a water body; and
4. the burn is not likely to cause the release of a polluting substance into a water body.

The applicant will be required to provide proof that the above criteria are met, or that an assessment has been completed under YESAA, prior to the permit application being processed by the Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch. For more information regarding YESAA, please contact your local Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) Designated Office or visit www.yesab.ca.

Notification

Air emissions permits for burning a structure require that notice be provided to the local fire department and all property owners within a 1 km radius of the burn site at least two business days prior to conducting the burn. The permittee must also provide notice to an environmental protection officer at least five business days prior to conducting the burn. This ensures that the Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch is aware of when the burn will be conducted and can arrange for an environmental protection officer to attend the burn, if desired. The permittee must ensure that there is sufficient fire response capacity on site at all times during the burn.

Preparations

Regardless of whether or not the burn is being conducted for fire department training purposes, the permittee must take all reasonable measures to remove the following materials from the structure prior to the burn:

- asbestos-containing materials;
- urea formaldehyde foam insulation;
- vinyl siding;
- synthetic carpets;
- linoleum;
- fluorescent fixtures;
- glycols from heating systems;
- refrigerants;
- PVC and ABS piping and other plastics, where accessible;

The *Environment Act* and Regulations may be viewed online at legislation.yukon.ca/env.html, or at any Yukon Public Library, territorial agent, territorial representative or regional services office. You may purchase copies at the Inquiry Centre, Government of Yukon Administration Building, 2071-2nd Avenue in Whitehorse, request by email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca or mail: Government of Yukon Queen's Printer, Box 2703 (W-4), Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6 (phone 867-667-5146 or toll free 1-800-661-0408, extension 5146).

- thermostats containing mercury switches;
- batteries;
- fire extinguishers;
- rubber;
- pesticides, paints, solvents, cleaning products, and other unused chemicals;
- treated wood, where accessible; and
- household garbage.

Taking reasonable measures means removing all of the above materials that can be readily accessed and removed without risking the health and safety of any persons working on the structure. For example, the permittee would not be expected to break into the walls of the structure to remove piping or wiring, but would be expected to remove accessible synthetic carpets and linoleum. Clarification on what is considered to be reasonable measures can be provided by the Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch on a case-by-case basis. All materials removed from the structure must be properly disposed of at a permitted public solid waste disposal facility, commercial dump or special waste management facility, as appropriate.

Other Approvals

The permittee may need to obtain either a municipal or Yukon government burn permit. It is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that all necessary approvals are in place prior to conducting the burn.

For more information on the *Environment Act*, please contact:

Government of Yukon	Phone:	867-667-5683
Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch	Toll Free:	1-800-661-0408, ext. 5683
(V-8)	Fax:	867-393-6205
Box 2703	Email:	envprot@gov.yk.ca
Whitehorse, Yukon	Web:	Yukon.ca
Y1A 2C6		

The *Environment Act* and Regulations may be viewed online at legislation.yukon.ca/env.html, or at any Yukon Public Library, territorial agent, territorial representative or regional services office. You may purchase copies at the Inquiry Centre, Government of Yukon Administration Building, 2071-2nd Avenue in Whitehorse, request by email queens.printer@gov.yk.ca or mail: Government of Yukon Queen's Printer, Box 2703 (W-4), Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6 (phone 867-667-5146 or toll free 1-800-661-0408, extension 5146).