



McHenry County Department of Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2010

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Restrictions for open burning, alternatives

WOODSTOCK IL – With the warmer spring weather, cleaning up the yard is on everyone’s mind.

McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) reminds residents to review the Open Burning restrictions on its webpage (www.mcdh.info, Environmental Health, quick link “*Open Burning*”) for the removal of landscape waste. Landscape waste consists of grass or shrubbery cuttings, leaves and tree limbs. Residents may burn landscape waste on weekend days (Saturday, Sunday) if the burn area meets the setback requirements of at least 100 feet from a school, business, church or house and 50 feet from a barn, shed or detached garage. In areas where there is not a ban or more restrictive ordinance, the County ordinance – which is in effect year round – must be followed.

MCDH encourages a more earth-friendly approach:

- Reduce/Reuse – Use a mulching mower for grass and leaves or a chipper for branches. Consider native landscaping that will reduce the need for yard waste.
- Recycle – Composting landscape waste can reduce material volume by 70 - 80% and acts as a soil conditioner to improve plant growth.

Licensed municipal waste haulers in McHenry County are required to provide residential pick up of landscape waste although an additional fee may be charged. Some waste haulers contract with municipalities, neighbors and homeowner associations to pick up bagged or loose leaves from curbsides or dumpsters. Residents are encouraged to work collectively with neighbors and associations to arrange the most economical solution for their neighborhood. Homeowners may also drop off landscape waste at a local facility that composts these materials into organic compounds for reuse. A listing of these services is available on the *Open Burning* link (“other alternatives”).

Enforcement of open burning issues should be directed to your local police, fire department or MCDH non-emergency phone numbers. If you are reporting an emergency complaint that is life threatening or is a fire safety issue, CALL 911. Residents may also call MCDH’s after-hours phone number 815-344-7421 for assistance.

Complete details about the ordinance and suggested alternatives are available online at www.mcdh.info or by calling 815-334-4585.

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“Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966.”