

# Smoke Management Frequently Asked Questions

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*Applicable to all levels of the Smoke Management Program and all land ownerships*

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## Registration Questions

### **Do I really need to print out a copy of the instructions before I start filling out the Registration Form?**

Yes! You will find very helpful information located in the instructions. They will answer most of your questions and lead you to the appropriate appendices for further clarification. Also Chapter 2 and Appendix H of the guidance document will answer most questions on the requirements for all aspects of the program.

### **Can I burn under SMP I, SMP II and Open Burning on the same project?**

No. Anticipate your needs before you register. Once you pick an SMP level or decide to use the Open Burning Rule, stick with it. Please don't start out as open burning, register as SMP I, and then register the same project as SMP II. This wreaks havoc with the database and causes you more paperwork.

### **Whose name should be listed as the contact person on the Registrations Form?**

If you are the one filling out the paperwork please put your name on the registration, not your boss's, not the office/ranch/farm name, and not someone else in the office/ranch/farm unless they are familiar with the project. Frequently we call the person whose name is on the paperwork when there are questions and they know nothing about the project or the Smoke Management Program process. This is frustrating and it can waste the time of both parties.

### **What telephone number should I use on the Registration Form?**

Please put your office/ranch/farm phone number or another number where you can be reached during business hours.

### **Can a burn project be both restoration and maintenance?**

For restoration or maintenance choose only one. If a project has some of both choose the greater of the two. Reference the instructions to find out the difference between the two.

### **What should I enter for the alternatives to burning?**

The Air Quality Bureau wants to know why you did NOT use an alternative and decided to burn this project. An explanation of the project's history is not needed. Please read the instructions for more information and examples.

### **Can I enter a range for numbers I'm not sure of such as fuel loading, elevation, and cubic feet?**

No. When filling out any of the forms do not put in a range of numbers. Use your best estimate and if you need help please call the smoke line (505-476-4330 or 1-800-224-7009 and ask for smoke management). Please remember that this data is entered into a database where calculations are performed on the data. The calculations cannot be performed on ranges. If you are entering data online there should be checks to keep you from doing this; if you send in a form by fax or email there are no checks so you need to keep this in mind. This applies to fuel loading, cubic feet, percent consumption, acres burned, elevation, etc. Please read the instructions for more information.

### **Do I need to add the units behind the numbers and dates on the forms?**

No. When entering data such as dates, fuel loading and cubic feet do not spell out the month, day, year, acres or cubic feet; use numbers only. Do not put in your fuel loading with tons per acre behind it. Do not enter your cubic feet with cubic feet behind it. Please remember that this data is entered into a database where calculations are performed on the data. The calculations cannot be performed on text. If you are entering data online there should be checks to keep you from doing this; if you send in a form by fax or email there are no checks so you need to keep this in mind.

### **I did a press release for my burn. Do I need to send a copy to the Air Quality Bureau?**

While it is not required to send the Air Quality Bureau a copy of the press release, it is a good idea to do so. We frequently get questions from the public about burns and having a copy of your press release gives us something we can send them. The press release can be mailed, e-mailed, or faxed in to the smoke management addresses/numbers.

### **What does my burn ID mean?**

Please reference the following examples:

#### ***Example 1: 05FIF0045***

05 = the current calendar year - the number is valid only for this calendar year

F = Federal, it could also be M for municipal, P for Private or S for State

I = this project is registered as SMP I

F = this is a forest burn, it could also be a C for crop

0045 = this is the 45th registered burn of this type

### **Example 2: 05FIIF0101**

05 = the current calendar year - the number is valid only for this calendar year

F = Federal, it could also be M for municipal, P for Private or S for State

II = this project is registered as SMP II

F = this is a forest burn, it could also be a C for crop

0101 = this is the 101st registered burn of this type

### **I have forgotten my ID number. Where can I find it?**

If you have forgotten your ID number you can look it up on the smoke management web page by going to the on-line forms. You will see a button called "Review Existing Database Information" - click that. You will then be able to click on buttons for registrations, notifications, cancellation, waivers and tracking. Once you click on one of these buttons you have the option of typing in an ID number or you can click the "view data" button and view all registered burns of that type. From here you can scroll through to find your project. And of course you can always call the smoke management phone and someone will be able to assist you.

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## Notification Questions

Do I really need to print out a copy of the instructions before I start filling out the Notification Form?

Yes! You will find very helpful information located in the instructions. They will answer most of your questions and lead you to the appropriate appendices for further clarification. Also Chapter 2 and Appendix H of the guidance document will answer most questions on the requirements for all aspects of the program.

### **Who should do the notification?**

Please do the notification yourself (or the burn boss or someone else in the office/ranch/farm familiar with the project and the smoke management process). For Federal Land Managers this is especially important for the notifications - most dispatch offices do not know anything about your projects, they don't understand the ID numbers, and they don't meet the 10 am deadline.

### **When should I notify the Air Quality Bureau that I'm ready to burn?**

Notification is due by 10 am one business day prior to the start of ignition. This is very important for smoke coordination within the state and with surrounding states. When entering the notification on-line the database logs the date and time so the Air Quality Bureau knows if you sent the notification in on time or not.

### **I have registered for SMP I. How do I notify after the initial registration?**

When notifying for the second or more times for SMP I please use the notification continuation sheet, not an initial registration form. If you notify using a registration form you will receive another ID

number for the same project. This can cause problems with the database since now there are two registrations and two IDs for the same burn project.

#### **What format should I use to enter the date?**

On the notification sheet and the notification continuation sheet please enter the date in the following format: mm/dd/yy.

#### **Do I need to enter an acreage or cubic foot volume for each day I want to burn?**

Yes. When notifying please make sure you have an acreage or cubic foot volume for each date. Remember this goes into a database that uses calculations and having an acreage or volume for only the first day of notification is not sufficient to perform daily estimates of smoke emissions.

#### **Can I notify for seven non-consecutive days at one time?**

No. When sending in a notification please notify for a week at a time only. Do not send in seven dates spread out over 2 or more weeks. This is done to provide as accurate of information as possible. There is no way to know what the weather will be that far in advance. This reduces the number of cancellations that need to be sent in and provides a more accurate assessment of daily emissions. It also helps because most folks do not send in timely cancellations.

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## Cancellation Questions

#### **Do I really need to print out a copy of the instructions before I start filling out the Cancellation Form?**

Yes! You will find very helpful information located in the instructions. They will answer most of your questions and lead you to the appropriate appendices for further clarification. Also Chapter 2 and Appendix H of the guidance document will answer most questions on the requirements for all aspects of the program.

#### **Who should do the cancellation?**

Please do the cancellation yourself (or the burn boss or someone else in the office/ranch/farm familiar with the project and the smoke management process). Please cancel as soon as possible to allow the opportunity for others to burn and to allow for an accurate assessment of daily emissions.

#### **Do I need to send in a cancellation?**

Yes. We are trying to estimate emissions on a daily basis so cancellations help us achieve a better estimate. If there comes a time when folks will be asked to postpone or reduce acreage your cancellation may let someone else burn.

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## Tracking Questions

### **Do I really need to print out a copy of the instructions before I start filling out the Tracking Form?**

Yes! You will find very helpful information located in the instructions. They will answer most of your questions and lead you to the appropriate appendices for further clarification. Also Chapter 2 and Appendix H of the guidance document will answer most questions on the requirements for all aspects of the program.

### **How soon do I need to send in a tracking form?**

For a prescribed fire the tracking form is due 2 weeks after the project is completed for the calendar year. For Wildfire Use the tracking form is due 2 weeks after the burn is declared out or by the end of the calendar year. For wildfire the tracking is due 6 weeks after the burn is declared out or by November 1st, whichever comes first.

### **I registered for a burn project but was not able to burn it. Do I still need to send in a tracking form?**

Yes. If you have a project that you were not able to burn, please submit a tracking form. On the form enter the Burn Name, Burn ID, and enter the duration as 0. The rest of the form can be left blank. You may enter comments. This helps us maintain a clean database. Some folks have notified, but not cancelled so we have no way of knowing what actually happened on that project unless we have a corresponding tracking form.

### **I have sent in the tracking form. Is there anything else I need to send in?**

If you have used the ventilation tracking form please send it in with the burn tracking form. These will help the Air Quality Bureau monitor what types of ventilation conditions folks are burning under and if the system provides enough burn days and flexibility for folks to accomplish their goals while meeting the requirements of the Regional Haze Rule. This is especially important if you are burning under a waiver and it may be a condition of the waiver that you send in the ventilation tracking form.

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## Wildfire and Wildfire Use Questions

### **Do I need to do anything if I have a wildfire?**

Maybe. If you have a wildfire that is 100 acres or more you will need to notify the Air Quality Bureau. Fires that do not reach 100 acres do not need to be reported to the Air Quality Bureau. Federal Land Managers will document the growth of the fire on an ICS-209. Private land managers will work with state forestry to get their information documented on an ICS-209. Once the fire is declared out a wildfire tracking form needs to be sent in. You will receive an ID number for the wildfire.

### **Do I need to register a Wildfire Use fire? If so, how soon do I need to do this?**

Once a Wildfire Use reaches 10 acres it needs to be registered as an SMP II. You will receive an ID number that you will use for daily notifications and on the tracking form.

### **Do I need to send in a daily notification for a Wildfire Use fire?**

Yes. Notify the Air Quality Bureau daily by phone, fax, or email about the growth of the fire until it becomes large enough to start an ICS-209. Once you start the ICS-209 the Air Quality Bureau can get the information from that form. Read Chapter 2 of the Smoke Management Program Guidance document and the SMP II form instructions for more information.

**I registered a Wildfire Use fire before it reached 10 acres. Do I still need to submit a tracking form?**

Yes. If you register a Wildfire Use before it becomes 10 acres and it goes out before it reaches 10 acres, you will still need to submit a tracking form. This ensures that every ID number issued has a corresponding tracking form.

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## Contact Questions

**How do I contact the person responsible for smoke management questions and program administration?**

Please address all correspondence (email, fax, mail) to Smoke Management. There are several of us who handle the smoke management paperwork. If there is a name on the paperwork, it may sit in someone's mailbox until they get back from annual leave, training, etc. By addressing the correspondence to smoke management you will ensure a timely response to your paperwork. The smoke management phone number is 505-476-4330 (or call toll-free 1-800-224-7009 and ask for smoke management) and the fax is 505-476-4375. The email address is [nmenv.smoke@state.nm.us](mailto:nmenv.smoke@state.nm.us).

**If the Air Quality Bureau needs to contact me, how will they do it?**

We will usually try by telephone first. Please make sure there are at least two people in the office/ranch/farm who understand the burn project and the smoke management process. If you are gone please leave someone in charge of the smoke duties. This is especially important if you have a Wildfire Use and are providing daily updates until you switch to the ICS-209 form. The Smoke Management Program is time sensitive and folks need to be aware of that and follow it. Ideally all fire personnel should be briefed on the Smoke Management Program process.

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## Smoke Database Questions

**I have a Windows based computer system and use Internet Explorer. Will I be able to access the on-line forms?**

Yes. When submitting forms on-line it works best in internet explorer and with a windows based system.

**I got an error message after filling out a form. How do I fix this?**

If you are using the on-line forms, submit the data and get an error message, use the back button to fix the error. You may get multiple error messages. Keep using the back button to fix the error - each one will come up individually and should tell you what the error is. If you need help call the smoke line. (505-476-4330)

**I didn't finish my project this calendar year. Will I need to get a new number for next year?**

Yes. The Smoke Management Program registers and tracks fires per calendar year. The ID number will tell you what calendar year you are registered for. (ex. 04FIIF0001 is a 2004 burn project; 05FIIF0001 is a 2005 burn project)

**How soon can I enter projects for the upcoming year?**

You can start entering projects for the coming calendar year in November of the current year. The new number won't be valid until January 1st. If you have projects that carry over from one year to the next, use the change button on the database so that you won't have to retype all the information.

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