



**Klickitat County in Unified Command**  
**Emergency Management & Public Health**  
199 Industrial Way, Goldendale, WA 98620  
Emergency Operations Center  
Public Information Officer 509-250-0528  
[klickitateocpio2@gmail.com](mailto:klickitateocpio2@gmail.com)



## Media Release

April 16th, 2020, at 5:00 PM

### **Klickitat County Residents are Asked to Refrain from Outdoor Burning**

The Klickitat County Board of Commissioners along with The Klickitat County Public Health Department (KCPHD) and The Department of Emergency Management (KCDEM) are requesting Klickitat County residents to voluntarily refrain from conducting outdoor burning while we respond to COVID-19.

We recognize that many residents use fire as a necessary tool to manage their lands, including industrial forest landowners, farmers, small woodland owners, and rural residents. However, it is important to weigh possible effects on the wider community before choosing to burn. Please be a good neighbor. Smoke from fires during the current pandemic may result in the following negative consequences for the public and first responders:

- Smoke inhalation causes respiratory symptoms, which may incorrectly appear to be COVID-19, leading to unnecessary testing or self-isolation
- Exposure to smoke will increase the risk of contracting respiratory diseases and/or worsen existing respiratory diseases for members of the public
- Right now our county has limited means to respond to COVID-19 outbreaks, we are also prioritizing PPE and have limited supply
- First responders are operating at limited capacity and have limited resources to respond to out-of-control burns

COVID-19 affects the respiratory system. Fever, cough and difficulty breathing are the most common symptoms. While some people with COVID-19 are hospitalized, most patients recover at home, where smoke from a nearby outdoor burn could worsen their condition. To avoid additional health impacts, all people in Klickitat County are asked to voluntarily refrain from conducting outdoor burning activities until further notice.

Burning that can be delayed includes:

- Debris burning around your property
- Slash and forest burning
- Agricultural burning that would impact neighbors and can be delayed

KC Board of Commissioners, KCDEM, and KCPHD encourage the public to use the following alternatives to burning when available:

- Compost or chip yard debris on site
- Haul yard debris to a composting site or to the transfer station for disposal

For more information on recycling and composting visit: <http://klickitatcounty.org/374/Solid-Waste>

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