

ROY COOPER
Governor

MARY PENNY KELLEY
Secretary

MICHAEL ABRACZINSKAS
Director



Burning Disaster Debris with an Air Curtain Incinerator (also known as Air Curtain Burners, Trench Burners, or Pit Burners)

Burning disaster debris in approved air curtain incinerators (ACIs) emits less smoke and harmful pollution than open burning. The use of ACIs to dispose of material generated by a natural disaster has specific requirements.

- **Duration of operations:** The maximum length of time the burning at the approved disaster debris site can occur without an air permit or notification is eight (8) weeks. After eight (8) weeks and before sixteen (16) weeks, a written notification as described below is required. One week before the sixteen (16) weeks are over, an extension request can be sent to the North Carolina Division of Air Quality (DAQ) Director providing the reasons that the additional time is needed. The DAQ Director shall provide written approval for the additional time if he or she finds that the additional time is warranted based on the information provided in the request.
- **Distances from structures:** The ACI shall be at least 300 feet from any dwelling, group of dwellings, commercial or institutional establishment, or other occupied structure not located on the property where the burning is conducted. The DAQ highly recommends that there be as much of a buffer as possible between the ACI location and any neighboring occupied structure. The DAQ may grant exceptions to the setback requirements if a signed, written statement waiving objections to the ACI location is obtained from owners, tenants, or residents of each dwelling within 300 feet of the site.
- **Prevailing winds and roads:** The wind direction at the time that the burning is initiated and the wind direction as forecasted by the National Weather Service at the time that the burning is initiated are away from any area, including public roads within 250 feet of the burning as measured from the edge of the pavement or other roadway surface, which may be affected by smoke, ash, or other air pollutants from the burning.
- **Permitting:** In order to avoid general Title V permitting with DAQ, ACIs will be limited to burning less than 35 tons per day. Two or more ACIs at the same location complying with this daily limitation can be operated at the same site provided that all ACIs meet the required distances and prevailing wind requirements.
- **Restrictions:** Material is not burned when the North Carolina Forest Service or other government agencies have banned burning for that area. Material is not burned in a county that the DAQ or the Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance and Protection, has forecasted to be in an Air Quality Action Day Code "Orange" or above during the 24-hour time period covered by that Air Quality Action Day. Information about the Air Quality Forecast or Action Days can be found by calling your [DAQ Regional Office](#) (see contact information on the next page) or at www.airquality.climate.ncsu.edu.
- **Permissible material:** ACIs can burn the following materials:
 - **Wood waste:** untreated wood and untreated wood products, including tree stumps (whole or chipped), trees, tree limbs (whole or chipped), bark, sawdust, chips, scraps, slabs, millings, and shaving.
 - **Clean lumber:** wood or wood products that have been cut or shaped and include wet, air-dried, and kiln-dried wood products. Clean lumber does not include wood products that have been painted, pigment-stained, or pressure-treated by compounds such as chromate copper arsenate, pentachlorophenol, and creosote, or manufactured wood products that contain adhesives or resins (e.g., plywood, particle board, flake board, and oriented strand board).



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Air Quality
217 West Jones Street | 1641 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1641
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- **Yard Waste:** grass, grass clippings, bushes, shrubs, and clippings from bushes and shrubs. Yard waste comes from residential, commercial/retail, institutional, or industrial sources as part of maintaining yards or other private or public lands.

Burning construction debris could jeopardize FEMA reimbursement for debris collection and disposal if the debris contains hazardous waste (such as asbestos) or would result in an air quality violation.

- **Written notification:** The owner/operator shall request permission to conduct the burning using an ACI by providing written notification to the DAQ's Regional Office Supervisor with the following information:
 - Location of the ACI, with a map that shows that the location meets the 300 feet setback requirement from occupied structures (a 300-foot circle from the center of the ACI location on an aerial or satellite map would be helpful)
 - Date that unit will start operation, duration of operation, and expected end date
 - Identification of the natural disaster for which the ACI is being used (specify the storm and the State of Emergency Declaration)
 - Description of the types of materials that are being burned
 - Description of the size and design of the unit (make/model and daily or hourly capacity)
 - Statement that there is no other practical method of disposal
 - Signed waivers for any occupied structures within 300 feet of the ACI location
 - Extension request if burning more than 16 weeks, providing the reasons that the additional time is needed

Contact information for DEQ Regional Offices and Local Air Programs



Regional Office	Main Phone Number
Asheville Regional Office	(828) 296-4500
Fayetteville Regional Office	(910) 433-3300
Mooresville Regional Office	(704) 235-2100
Raleigh Regional Office	(919) 791-4200
Washington Regional Office	(252) 948-3800
Wilmington Regional Office	(910) 796-7215
Winston-Salem Regional Office	(336) 776-9800

Three North Carolina counties — Buncombe, Forsyth and Mecklenburg — are served by local air programs.

County	Local Air Program	Main Phone Number
Buncombe	Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency	(828) 250-6777
Forsyth	Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance & Protection	(336) 703-2440
Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg County Air Quality	(704) 336-5430

