

WAC 173-430-040 Agricultural burning requirements. (1) Agricultural burning is allowed when it is reasonably necessary to carry out the enterprise. A farmer can show it is reasonably necessary when it meets the criteria of the best management practices and no practical alternative is reasonably available. In certain circumstances, ecology may certify an alternative to burning. Where the certified alternative is reasonably available, burning is not allowed. Certified alternatives are described in WAC 173-430-045.

(2) For allowed agricultural burning, ecology or local air authorities with jurisdiction will make daily or specific fire burn calls (during times of anticipated burning) and use metering when necessary to minimize the potential for adverse air quality impacts. Metering is a technique of limiting emission from burning at specific times and places by taking into account potential emission rates, forecasted weather (dispersion), and current and projected air quality. The burn decision process will consider: The potential number of burns and their expected size(s) and duration(s); recent and current ambient concentrations of pollutants; other potential emissions sources; and evaluations and judgments about how foreseeable meteorological conditions will affect concentrations of pollutants in the air sheds.

(a) For the purposes of this section: The smoke management index is a set of conditions that guide the production of certain reports as described in (c) of this subsection and evaluations as described in (d) of this subsection. The smoke management index is not an air quality standard as defined in RCW 70.94.030(4) and further identified in RCW 70.94.331. The smoke management index is not an emission standard as defined in RCW 70.94.030(9) and further identified in RCW 70.94.331. The smoke management index is not an air pollution episode as described in RCW 70.94.710.

(b) Ecology and local air authorities making daily or specific fire burn calls in areas where PM2.5 concentrations are regularly monitored will follow the procedures in (c) of this subsection when making the burn decision whenever either of the following smoke management index conditions exist:

(i) A most recent daily average (twenty-four-hour) PM2.5 concentration was equal to or greater than 16 micrograms per cubic meter. This is based on the division between the "good" and "moderate" classifications of the 2009 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index (AQI) for (twenty-four hours average PM2.5) particulate matter.

(ii) A two-hour rolling average PM2.5 concentration, during the most recent twenty-four to thirty hours was equal to or greater than the regional seasonal average PM2.5 concentration plus 15 micrograms per cubic meter.

(c) In authorizing additional burning, a determination will be documented explaining that the decision to allow additional burning is not expected to result in a further significant deterioration of air quality. The determination will be entered on a standard form noting the date, time, the location of the additional burning, the size of the burn(s), and a brief explanation of the opinion as to why the additional burning is not expected to result in a further, significant reduction of air quality. The purpose of the determination and record-keeping requirements of this section is to enhance agency and public understanding of the effectiveness of the daily burn and metering decision-making process, and to improve its application over time. A notice of the determinations will be made by ecology or a local air au-

thority with jurisdiction at the time the daily burn decision is communicated. Ecology or a local air authority with jurisdiction will also periodically make the determination forms conveniently available to the public.

(d) Following a determination described in (c) of this subsection and a deterioration of air quality to levels equal to or greater than a two-hour rolling average concentration of the regional seasonal average PM2.5 concentration plus 25 micrograms per cubic meter in the specific area during the twenty hours following such determination, ecology or the local air authority with jurisdiction will evaluate the deterioration and document any findings and opinions regarding why the deterioration occurred. Ecology or the local air authority with jurisdiction will make evaluations under this subsection conveniently available to the public.

(e) Ecology or a local air authority with jurisdiction may evaluate emission dispersion impacts in the regular course of business. In addition, ecology or the local air authority with jurisdiction will produce an annual report summarizing determinations and evaluations under the smoke management index.

(f) Under RCW 70.94.473 and 70.94.6512, no burning is authorized when an air quality alert, warning, emergency or impaired air quality condition has been issued.

(g) For purposes of protecting public health (not eliminating agricultural burning), if an area exceeds or threatens to exceed unhealthy air pollution levels, the permitting authority may limit the number of acres, on a pro rata basis as provided by RCW 70.94.6532 or by 70.94.6528.

(3) Except as described in WAC 173-430-020(5), all agricultural burning requires a permit.

(a) Ecology or local air authorities with jurisdiction will provide agricultural burning application forms for agricultural burning.

(b) To qualify for an agricultural burning permit the farmer must be an agricultural operation or government entity with specific agricultural burning needs, such as irrigation districts, drainage districts, and weed control boards.

(c) Application information. A farmer must fill out the information requested on a permit application, pay the permitting fee, and submit it to the permitting authority for review and approval before burning.

(i) The application must describe the reason for burning and include at least the following information: Name and address of the person or corporation responsible for the burn, the specific location (county; legal description: Section, township, range, block and unit number), the crop type, the type or size of the burn, driving directions to the burn, specific reason for the burn, the target date for burning, a map, signature of the responsible party, and any additional information required by the permitting authority. Each permitting authority may require additional information on the application.

(ii) All applications must comply with other state or local rules.

(d) The permitting authority must evaluate the application, and approve the permit before burning.

(e) Permit decisions including the issuance, denial, or conditioning must be based on consideration of air quality conditions in the area affected by the proposed burning, the time of year, meteorological conditions, the size and duration of the proposed burning activity, the type and amount of vegetative material to be burned, the

applicant's need to carry out the burning, existence of extreme burning conditions, risk of escape onto property owned by another, and the public's interest in the environment.

(f) Ecology or its delegate, or a local air authority with jurisdiction, or its delegate must approve or deny the permit in part or in whole based on information in the application.

(g) Ecology and its delegate or a local air authority with jurisdiction or its delegate may issue permits for appropriate agricultural burning activities in nonattainment areas, maintenance areas, and urban growth areas as described in RCW 70.94.6514.

(4) All agricultural burning permits require a fee.

The applicant must include the fee when submitting the application. The permitting authority will charge fees as described under WAC 173-430-041.

(5) All agricultural burning permits must include conditions intended to minimize air pollution.

(a) A farmer must comply with the conditions on the agricultural burning permit.

(b) Permits must be conditioned to minimize emissions and impacts insofar as practical, including denial of permission to burn during periods of adverse meteorological conditions. When necessary as determined by ecology or the local air authorities to ensure compliance with the act, permit conditions will include at least one of the following:

- The use of a daily burn decision.
- Permit specific decisions.
- Metering.

(c) The permitting authority must:

(i) Act on a complete application (as determined by the permitting authority) within seven days of receipt.

(ii) Evaluate the application and approve or deny all or part of it.

(iii) Evaluate the application to determine if the requested burning is within the general or crop-specific best management practices.

(iv) If the permitting authority denies the application, they must state the reason for the denial.

(6) Other laws. A farmer must obtain any local permits, licenses, or other approvals required by any other laws, rules, or ordinances. The farmer must also honor other agreements entered into with any federal, state, or local agency.

[Statutory Authority: 2010 c 70, RCW 70.94.6528 and *Ted Rasmussen Farms, LLC v. State of Washington, Department of Ecology*, Docket # 22989-1-III. WSR 10-23-049 (Order 10-05), § 173-430-040, filed 11/10/10, effective 12/11/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.94.650, 70.94.743, and 70.94.745. WSR 06-16-052 (Order 04-10), § 173-430-040, filed 7/26/06, effective 8/26/06. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.94.656. WSR 98-12-016 (Order 97-45), § 173-430-040, filed 5/26/98, effective 6/26/98. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.94.656(4). WSR 97-03-021 (Order 96-05), § 173-430-040, filed 1/7/97, effective 2/7/97. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.94.650. WSR 95-03-083 (Order 94-17), § 173-430-040, filed 1/17/95, effective 2/17/95; WSR 93-14-022 (Order 92-58), § 173-430-040, filed 6/28/93, effective 7/29/93. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.94.331. WSR 90-19-062 (Order 90-10), § 173-430-040, filed 9/17/90, effective 10/18/90; Order DE 77-20, § 173-430-040, filed 11/9/77. Formerly WAC 18-16-040.]