

# Burn Barrel Amnesty Program

## What is the Burn Barrel Amnesty Program?

In an effort to reduce the harmful health effects of household burn barrels, **The Solid Waste Department**, in conjunction with the **La Crosse County Health Department**, will be accepting burn barrel drop-offs **free** of charge for two weeks from **October 2, 2017 to October 15, 2017**, during National Recycling and Solid Waste Month. That is a **\$25** savings. Upon drop-off, residents will be asked to sign a **pledge** stating they will no longer use burn barrels on their property to dispose of solid waste. All residents who drop-off a barrel and sign the pledge will be entered into a **drawing for a \$100 and \$50 Visa Gift Card**.



### Did you know ...

... just **two burn barrels** release more dioxin per year than French Island's Xcel Energy Plant?

## Who's At Risk?

**Anyone** burning trash, their neighbors, and area livestock are at risk of being impacted.

### High Risk:

**Women of Childbearing Age:** Exposure to toxic particulates from burning can have negative impacts on a fetus. Dioxins from burning plastics can lead to adverse reproductive development.

**Children:** Lungs are still developing. Exposure to these particulates can lead to higher levels of illness, suppress lung function and trigger asthma. Contaminated soils can be a dangerous playground as well.

**Elderly:** Due to weakened immune systems, plus those with existing respiratory problems, elderly are at even higher risk of becoming ill as a result of breathing in the particulate matter.

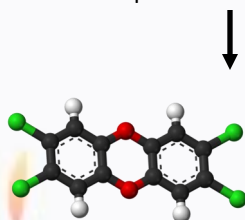
**Reduce** the amount of trash you produce; buy reusable water bottles, bags and food containers.

**Reuse** household items or donate them.

**Recycle** and sort waste for collection or drop-off. A guide is available from your local municipality.

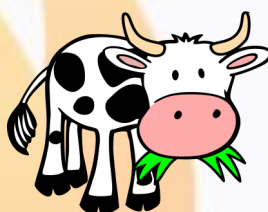
## How Burn Barrels Impact Health

Household waste is sometimes disposed of using burn barrels. These typically burn at 400-500°F, much lower than municipal incinerators, which burn at 2,200°F and use filters. Due to the lower temperature, burn barrels do not allow for complete combustion of waste.<sup>1</sup>



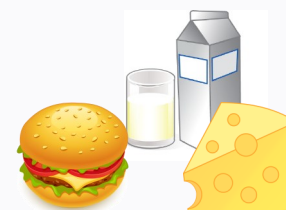
Pollutants are therefore released into the air. These vary with the type of waste, but can include emissions such as dioxins, ash, and nitrogen oxides.<sup>1</sup> Dioxins result from burning plastics and can pose a significant health risk to humans.<sup>2</sup>

Dioxins and pollutants can be absorbed by grass, plants, and groundwater. The smoke and ash from burning can also be problematic. Ash can contain heavy metals, such as lead and mercury, that may also leak into groundwater.<sup>1</sup>



When animals consume these contaminated grasses, the dioxins concentrate in their fat and some is released in their milk.<sup>1,2</sup>

As a result, these concentrated dioxin levels enter our food supply. This includes our meat, dairy and fish.<sup>1</sup>



These toxins can have a number of harmful effects on human health.<sup>1,2</sup> Due to high consumption levels of dairy and meat in Americans, the US EPA has stated that dioxin levels are high enough to add a significant cancer risk. One burn barrel of household waste can affect a whole community.<sup>2</sup> By disposing of burn barrels, you can break the cycle.



<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. (n.d.). Health and Environmental Effects of Open Burning. Retrieved February 20, 2017, from <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/OpenBurning/Effects.html>

<sup>2</sup>BurnBarrel.org. (n.d.). Background on burn barrels, open burning, backyard burning. Retrieved February 20, 2017, from <http://www.burnbarrel.org/Background/Background.html>