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ALLOTMENT BONFIRE GUIDANCE

Every year, Ealing Council receives a large number of complaints about bonfires causing a nuisance. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows local councils to take offenders to court should their bonfires cause a nuisance to neighbouring local residents, such as having an unreasonable effect on their enjoyment of their home or garden. In some cases, this means that there is of necessity a total site ban on bonfires. On other sites, many of these complaints could be avoided, preferably by not having a bonfire, or by taking some simple steps to prevent bonfires from becoming a nuisance and showing consideration to neighbours. This leaflet gives some suggestions on how this might be achieved and explains the possible consequences of a failure to follow these guidelines.

Under No Circumstances: burn any oily rags, rubber, plastics, or other materials which create heavy smoke or toxic fumes. Failure to follow this rule will inevitably lead to putting your tenancy at risk and could lead to your prosecution under The Environmental Protection Act 1990. Any such waste should be disposed of at the Re-use and Recycling Centre at Greenford Depot, Greenford Road, Greenford

Before You Start a Bonfire: consider whether the waste could be composted instead. Composting is much more environmentally friendly. If you have not got a compost bin, then contact Ealing Council on 020 8825 6000 for information on how to get one. You can also dispose of green waste, unwanted wood (or preservative treated wood that gives off fumes on burning) at the Greenford Depot.

Should you decide to have a bonfire:

DO light your bonfire at an appropriate time of day with weather conditions that will mean the bonfire does not inconvenience local residents.

DO NOT light your bonfire on days when the wind direction takes smoke in the direction of nearby local residences or rights of way.

DO NOT light a bonfire when local residents have washing out to dry, are enjoying their gardens or have windows wide open.

DO NOT burn damp grass clippings or 'green' material as this inevitably creates thick smoke.

DO advise your nearest plotholders before you light a bonfire. Restrict making bonfires to when strictly necessary to avoid causing offence.

DO choose your bonfire site carefully, well away from trees, fences and windows. Beware of attempting bonfires on very windy days as they can easily get out of control. Have buckets of water handy, just in case.

DO NOT leave your fire to smoulder for long periods and never leave it unattended. Damp it down until the bonfire is 'cold' before you leave it.

DO rake the ashes when cold into the soil as a useful fertiliser. Small pieces of charcoal can be included, but larger pieces should be picked out first.

Consequences of Failure to follow Guidelines

Tenants failing to follow the above guidelines will be putting their tenancy at risk. In the case of sites located close to surrounding local residences, persistent complaints are likely to lead to a blanket ban on all site bonfires.

If approached by a council officer regarding a bonfire problem, plot holders should be co-operative and extinguish their bonfire when asked to do so. If requested, they should provide their full name and plot number. Failure to comply and/or Instances of verbal or physical abuse towards Council Staff will be documented and may be used in any subsequent court proceedings.