

HIDDEN LAKE ASSOCIATION – OUTDOOR FIRE POLICY

Policy on Restrictive Covenant #2 USES regarding fireplaces: The covenant states “No outdoor fire shall be permitted thereon except in fireplaces or barbecue equipment.”

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to allow the enjoyment of outdoor fires while requiring that any permitted burning is done cleanly, safely, responsibly, and with consideration of neighbors who may be impacted by the smoke. The policy was developed to ensure and protect the health and safety and wellbeing of all HLA members and visitors on HLA land. Children, seniors, and people with certain diseases including asthma and COPD can be particularly sensitive to the health effects of particle pollution in wood smoke. Improper outdoor burning and wind direction can release toxic compounds to the air that can impact the property owner as well as neighbors’ health. Enforcement of this policy may include fines, daily civil penalties allowed by law, injunctive relief, or any other enforcement action allowed by law.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. An **outdoor fire** is a fire that burns in the open, not inside any type of building or enclosure.
2. A **fireplace** as delineated in HLA restrictive covenants includes **bonfires, campfires, fire pits and chimineas** (which are all defined below) and are permitted within the guidelines and restrictions of this policy.
 - a. A **bonfire** is a large open-air fire used as part of a celebration
 - b. A **campfire** is a small outdoor fire at a campsite or backyard that provides light and warmth, and heat for cooking.
 - c. A **fire pit** is a pit dug into the ground or is a freestanding metal vessel in which a contained outdoor fire is made.
 - d. A **chiminea** is a freestanding earthenware or metal fireplace that in its typical form has a bulbous body which is open in the front and is topped by an elongated chimney
 - e. A **brush fire** is often used to burn large piles of wood and/or brush when clearing land.
 - f. **Barbeque equipment, also known as barbecue grills**, are devices that cook food by applying heat from below. There are several varieties including gas-fueled, charcoal, or electric.
3. **HLA common ground** is the waterfront, pool area, Rossi Hall side yard and backyard, playground area, tennis court area, and Hidden Lake picnic area.

POLICY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Permits may be required for outdoor fires in the Hidden Lake Association. The permit guidelines are established by New Hampshire RSA 227-L, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services www.des.nh.gov and the Town of Stoddard Fire Warden (www.stoddardnh.org). NH requires anyone who wishes “to burn clean, ordinary combustibles such as leaves, brush or untreated lumber, or have a camp or cooking fire” to have written permission from the landowner and a fire permit from the local forest fire warden or local fire department in the town or city where the fire will be kindled. The Town of Stoddard Fire Warden states “Burn Permits are required by law for any type of outdoor fire. The only fires that do not require a burn permit are gas and charcoal grills, and wood-type stoves that are fully enclosed with a stack and a spark arrestor. Rubbish and trash cannot be burned; it can only be disposed of at the Stoddard Transfer Station.”

2. The chart below designates when fire permits are required from the Town of Stoddard Fire Warden and/or the HLA Board of Directors (see attached Application):

LOCATION OF FIRE	TYPE OF FIRE	HLA PERMIT REQUIRED	STODDARD FIRE WARDEN PERMIT REQUIRED*
HLA common ground	Campfire	Yes	Yes
	Bonfire	Yes	Yes
	Fire Pit	Yes	Yes
	Chimineas	Yes	Maybe**
	Brush Fire	Yes	Yes
	Barbecue Grill	Yes	No
Privately owned lots	Campfire	No	Yes
	Bonfire	No	Yes
	Fire Pit	No	Yes
	Chimineas	No	Maybe**
	Brush Fire	No	Yes
	Barbecue Grill	No	No

* Stoddard Fire Departments Permit Requirements are as of 11/02/20 – for updated guidance, please visit the Stoddard Fire Department website or reach out to the Fire Warden.

** Per the Stoddard Fire Department and State of New Hampshire - regardless of type fire, the maximum diameter of wood you are allowed to burn is 5" round.

*** Some Chimineas may require a fire permit if they are not fully contained and do not have a spark-arrestor. Please visit the Stoddard Fire Department website or reach out to the Fire Warden for guidance.

3. Recommended rules for **campfires** and **bonfires** include:
- Check for burn bans and extreme wind before burning. Stoddard Fire and Rescue posts burn categories daily and it is recommended before burning that you consult their website, their Facebook page, or on their outdoor sign in front of the Stoddard Fire Station.
 - Dig a pit away from overhanging branches.
 - Circle the pit with rocks.
 - Clear at least a 10-foot area around and above the pit down to the dirt, removing anything that could catch on fire. The State of NH defines specifications for each fire. Please review their website for appropriate guidelines. Review the Town of Stoddard guidelines for outdoor fires or speak to the local fire warden.
 - Stack extra wood upwind and away from fire.
 - After lighting, throw the match into the fire.
 - Never leave a campfire or bonfire unattended; an adult (18 years or older) must supervise the campfire or bonfire at all times.
 - A water supply and shovels must be nearby.
 - Never put anything but wood into the fire.
 - Do not pull sticks out of the fire.
 - Do not sit on the fire ring or rocks around the campfire.
 - To put the fire out, dump lots of water on it, stir it with a shovel, then dump more water on it. Make sure it is COLD before leaving the area.

The **HLA Outdoor Fire Policy** was reviewed and updated by the HLA Bylaws and Policy Committee during meetings from Fall 2022 through Winter 2023 and adopted by the HLA Board at the February 2023 Board of Directors Meeting on February 21st, 2023.