

SUMMARY of BEACH FIRE RULES in CALIFORNIA

There are approximately 435 beaches in the State of California (<http://www.beachcalifornia.com/sitelist.html>). Of these about 38 beaches allow fires (<http://www.beachcalifornia.com/beach-bonfires-california.html>) .

It appears that ONLY Carmel Beach allows unlimited numbers of fires and ONLY Carmel does not require a designated fire pit

Two major new programs have been implemented to try to further manage this issue, one in the National Park Service at Ocean Beach and one at Newport Beach. They are outlined below. Following that are the published beach fire rules from the remaining beaches, cities or counties.

NPS PILOT PROJECT

Ocean Beach Fire Revised Pilot Program

On Friday, May 23 new regulations went into effect for fires on Ocean Beach. This follows a proposal announced on April 21, 2014 to implement a Revised Pilot Program for fires at Ocean Beach. The Revised Pilot includes changes to the existing program in order to address growing concern about the unsafe conditions resulting from these fires, and the unsustainable level of staff effort required to ensure public safety and compliance with regulations. Public feedback was received through May 16, 2014.

Information about this Revised Pilot, which includes an impact assessment, response to public comments, amendment to the compendium, and copies of the data collection forms that will be used can be found on this webpage; click Document List on the left, then click on the document title to download.

Changes to the Fire Program:

- 12 new fire rings installed
- Fires must be extinguished at 9:00 PM
- Fires prohibited on all Spare the Air Days year-round
- Data will be collected on compliance with regulations

At the end of the Revised Pilot, once the data collected is evaluated, The National Park Service will determine the next steps for the fire program on Ocean Beach. Long term decisions could include continuing the revised pilot program, making further program modifications, or no longer allowing fires on the beach. The program will be in place and monitored from Memorial Day weekend (May 23, 2014) to Labor Day (September 1, 2014).

The development and implementation of this Revised Pilot Program is in response to the park experiencing a high volume of law enforcement calls, criminal activity, daily accumulation of abandoned refuse, and injuries to visitors and staff as a result of lack of compliance with the

posted fire regulations on Ocean Beach. Click this link to view the current beach fire regulations: http://www.nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/fire_beachfireregs.htm

The most prevalent issues include:

- Unsafe and toxic materials being burned, such as treated wood and pallets, furniture, and trash.
- Dangerous materials such as broken glass, sharp metal, hot coals, and nails being left on the beach and scattered in the sand surrounding the fire rings
- Illegal activity, including consuming alcohol and illegal substances, disorderly conduct, assaults, underage intoxication, and other law enforcement incidents
- Glass containers (which are prohibited) on the beach
- Fires not being extinguished properly with water, leaving hot coals smoldering on the beach the morning after, which has caused serious injuries to unsuspecting visitors
- Unauthorized fires being burned outside of designated area and fire pits

Newport Beach

What's New and Why?

Visitors to our beaches will find a change in the fuels you can use for our sixty fire rings (27 at Big Corona and 33 at the Balboa Pier area). You can now only use charcoal. Your experience may be a little different – you will find a more even heat, even a longer heat and more heat, and almost no smoke or smoky smell. Cooking dinner seems much better over charcoal. So are s'mores. Your eyes won't sting and your clothes won't smell like smoke for hours afterwards. If family or friends have asthma or respiratory problems with wood smoke, they might find charcoal to be a much better experience. But the flame is less – and eventually charcoal moves to glowing coals.

This comes about because of a new rule to protect and improve air quality in our region. If a city's fire rings are 700' or less from residential areas, then the fuel source can only be charcoal unless the rings are spaced out at least 100' apart from each other. We in Newport have not wanted to space the rings differently – keeping them where they are keeps the same amount of sand open for other uses (blankets, volleyball, Frisbee, sunbathing), as well as avoids impacting our neighbors who don't experience smoke today.

As of March 24, charcoal is the only fuel source in the beach fire rings at both locations in Newport Beach. Enforcement efforts have begun with warnings and outreach / education as the City realizes some beach visitors will not be aware of the "charcoal only" rule. In time, administrative citations (which carry a first-violation fine of \$100) will be issued if a fire ring user chooses not to comply with the new rule.

What's the Best Charcoal Experience?

Purchase a bag or two of "lump" charcoal at Target, Home Depot, Lowes, the supermarket, or a similar store. It should be about \$13/bag. We've found that the best kinds are Royal Oak, Cowboy, and Hardwood – again, all "lump" charcoals (not briquettes). You do not have to use lighter fluid either – to avoid the lighter fluid smell, pick up a small carton of paraffin starters (you'll find these at Home Depot and other places – they'll be about \$3.50 for a box of 24 starters). Just 3-4 starters will get your fire going. Pile the charcoal a bit, with a peak in the center, place the 3-4 starters around the pile, light them, and enjoy good consistent heat for about two hours with two bags of lump-style charcoal (click [here](#) for some samples of lump-style charcoal).

Charcoal Only Advantages

Much less visible smoke

Less visible flame

Much less smell of smoke

- More warmth
- Warmth lasts longer
- More even warmth for cooking

Lighter fluid smell

- Paraffin starters solve this problem.

Fuel is lighter and easier to haul across the sand

Easier to start with paraffin starters

Easier to find and purchase

Less likely to have other hazards burned or left in the rings

- like nails, creosote, paint, plastics, and varnish.

Your experience won't be as good if you purchase briquettes or keep dumping lighter fluid on the charcoal. See the nearly smoke-free fire rings at Corona del Mar State Beach in the below photo taken on June 14, 2014.



State parks

FIRES are permitted only in facilities provided for this purpose. This is necessary to prevent disastrous fires. Portable stoves may be used in designated areas. It is the responsibility of every visitor to use extreme caution with any burning materials, including tobacco. All fireworks are prohibited.

Of 108 state parks, 29 allow fires. The state recently removed 7 parks from the list that allow fires.

Sand Diego County

“Long gone are the days of giant bonfires blazing unchecked on any part of the beach. All fires are now restricted to designated fire rings, and there are rules limiting the size (typically not to exceed the height and circumference of the ring). Barbecues are generally permitted at all parks and beaches and many even provide special receptacles for hot coals. Never dump coals or firewood in the sand; they can burn well into the next morning, leave nails and other debris on the beach, and have been the cause of untold injuries to bare feet.”

San Diego City

Pits

Where fire pits are provided **during the summer months**, they are available on a first come, first served basis. The burning of rubbish is prohibited. Only wood, charcoal or paper products may be used as fuel. Fuel for the fire may not exceed a height of more than twelve inches above the upper edge of the fire container. The fire must be extinguished before leaving the beach. Fires are not allowed between midnight and 5 a.m. Coals must be removed or deposited in hot coal containers. Open beach fires outside containers are prohibited at all San Diego beaches.

Laguna Beach

No person shall build, set, kindle, make or maintain a fire in any public parks and beaches that is used or intended to be used for cooking, lighting or heating purposes except in city-designated barbecues, picnic stoves and fire pits provided for such purposes. Where specifically permitted, no fire shall be built, set, kindled, made or maintained during the period one-half hour after sunset to six a.m. of the following day. No person shall be cited under this section unless he or she has first been notified by a police officer or public officer that he or she is in violation of the prohibition in this section and thereafter continues the violation. (Ord. 1512 § 5, 2009).

ORANGE COUNTY

Capistrano Beach

Wood fires are permitted in designated fire rings only.

Aliso Beach

Wood fires are permitted in designated fire rings only.

Salt Creek Beach

All fires are prohibited. Fire prevention must be the first concern of every visitor.

Humboldt County

Prohibited at Moonstone Beach. Permitted in designated fire rings in the camping and/or picnic areas at Freshwater, Van Duzen, A.W. Way, Samoa, Big Lagoon, and Clam Beach Also permitted on the beach areas of ocean beach parks. Fires must be 50 feet or more away from large driftwood, 100 feet seaward of the vegetated dunes, 300 feet from a known snowy plover nest, and be small enough to fit within a 30" circle. Larger fires by special permit for special events.

Huntington Beach

Question: Where are the bonfire rings?

Huntington City Beach

Huntington State Beach

Bolsa Chica State Beach

XIII. FIRES:

Fires are permitted in appropriate pits only. No fires are allowed in the sand. Gas, propane or electric grills allowed on the sand but must be 18" off the ground. Charcoal can only be used in a concrete fire ring or on grills placed in a concrete fire ring. Charcoal can also be used in the onsite barbecues in picnic areas at Bolsa Chica State Beach.

Dutch ovens can only be placed within a fire pit. No charcoal in sand.

No cooking under sand, pig, and clambakes, etc. allowed.

Santa Cruz

Seabright State Beach

6. Fires are allowed only in existing fire rings.

Failure to follow rules and regulations will result in forfeiture of security deposit and / or citation.

Santa Cruz

BBQ Regulations

- Gas and charcoal grills are allowed on the beach but if the lifeguard or City staff deems the grill unsafe or too large, you will be told to leave.
- Beachgoers will be cited if caught burying coals in the sand.
- Used coals (after extinguished) MUST be transported off the beach.
- Used coals can be taken to a dumping station located at Third Street and the Beach Boardwalk.

City of Monterey

City Ordinance prohibits bonfires on the beach that are not contained in a City-provided fire place or fire ring. Chairs, arches, tents, musicians, floral arrangements, etc. are not permitted on the beach. Beaches are open to the public, therefore, the public may walk through or occupy any and all areas of the beach – you may not cordon off the area you intend to use. The only privilege associated with a Beach Permit is the right for a "group" to assemble.

Sonoma County

Bodega Dunes

No DOGS and NO FIRES are allowed on the beach as a measure to protect the snowy plovers.

Los Angeles County

Cabrillo – All cooking must be contained in the fire ring.

Dockweiler – All cooking must be contained in the fire ring.

Malibu Surfrider – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Manhattan Beach – Cooking prohibited.

Marina "Mother's" Beach – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Nicholas Canyon – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Point Dume – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Redondo Beach – Cooking prohibited.

Royal Palms – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Topanga – Cooking prohibited.

Torrance – Cooking prohibited.

Venice – Cooking prohibited.

White Point – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Will Rogers – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Zuma – Cooking prohibited on the beach.

Golden Gate, NPS

Beach fire regulations

Beach fires are only permitted at:

- **Muir Beach:** Only three fire rings are available on the beach near the south end of the parking lot. Fires must be cleared and groups must vacate the beach by the end of the day-use hours (changes seasonally). Please call (415) 388-2595 for hours.
- **Ocean Beach:** Only in the fire rings provided, between Stairwells 15 and 20. See below for more details.

Fires on Ocean Beach

- **Fires are only allowed WITHIN the provided concrete fire rings.** Any fires created outside of these rings are illegal.
- **NO GLASS OR ALCOHOL** is allowed on the beach.
- **Fires must be out by 9:00 PM.**
- **The parking lots at Ocean Beach close at 10:00 PM each night** and are owned and managed by the City of San Francisco.
- **Fires are not allowed on "Spare the Air" days.** When air pollution reaches unhealthy levels, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District notifies the public by declaring a "Spare the Air day." To find out if today is a "Spare the Air" day, visit www.sparetheair.org or call 1-800-HELP-AIR.
- Fires must be **extinguished with WATER ONLY**. Bring a bucket to collect ocean water, or bring your own water. Covering the fire with sand only insulates the hot coals and fills the pits with sand.
- Burn only untreated, unpainted wood.
- Don't burn pallets or any wood containing nails or other hardware.
- Bring your own firewood. Gathering, cutting or scavenging of firewood or kindling is not permitted at the beach or in the park. Locally grown firewood is best.

- Burn Clean. Do not use accelerants such as lighter fluid, as they leave pollution and poisons in the sand and the air. Paper and kindling are preferred fire starter material.
- Don't burn trash or debris. Most trash gives off pollution and poisonous gases.
- Refuse must be removed from the beach. LEAVE NO TRACE.
- Fires shall be attended at all times by a responsible adult (18 year of age or older).
- Minors must be supervised by one person 21 or over for each 10 people under 18.
- Groups of more than 25 people must obtain a permit by calling 415-561-4700. The administrative cost for the permit is \$50.00.
- Large-scale events may require more extensive review by National Park Service staff. If it is determined that your event will require extensive review, the administrative cost may be higher. Observe all posted regulations.

San Clemente

Fires are allowed in self contained barbeques (off of the sand) or fire pits only. Please dispose of hot coals in fire rings only, not in trash cans since this can start fires.

What is illegal on San Clemente Beaches?

Following is a summary of some of the main laws that apply to City Beaches. For a complete list of laws, please contact the City Clerk at (949) 361-8301. For specific questions, please contact the Marine Safety Division at (949) 361-8219.

1. The consumption of alcohol or possession of opened alcohol beverages is prohibited on San Clemente beaches.
2. Dogs are prohibited on San Clemente beaches.
3. Riding of bicycles is prohibited on the asphalt area extending north and south of the base of the pier at any time. Riding of bicycles is prohibited on those portions of the Beach Trail that overlay the beach service road from June 15 through Labor Day.
4. Littering is prohibited.
5. Any activity deemed dangerous to the public (typically on crowded days) can be prohibited at the lifeguard's discretion.
6. Glass containers on the beach or pier are prohibited.
7. Overhead casting on the pier is prohibited.
8. Jumping or diving from the pier is prohibited.
9. Public nudity is prohibited.
10. Amplified sound is prohibited.
11. Motor vehicles on the beach or pier are prohibited.
12. Removal of sand from beach or digging holes greater than two feet is prohibited.
13. Smoking on the beach, beach trail or pier is prohibited.

