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## **Property Owners in Crawford, Mercer Counties Ordered to Pay Penalties for Open Burning**

Open burning can cause health problems, safety issues and general nuisance conditions, even in rural areas. Ohio allows certain types of open burning in rural areas; however, some restrictions still apply. When these regulations are violated, Ohio EPA takes action to stop the problem, which may include civil penalties against those responsible.

Recently, Ohio EPA ordered two rural property owners to pay a combined \$1,000 for violating Ohio's [open burning regulations](#).

Al Brice of Bucyrus Township has been ordered to pay a \$750 civil penalty for three open burning violations in Crawford County. Michael Harrod of Jefferson Township, near Celina, was assessed a \$250 penalty for a single violation in Mercer County.

Mr. Brice operates a demolition and salvage business dismantling old barns. Salvageable material is offered for resale. Other waste is usually burned on-site, then the fire remnants and non-combustible material are buried.

After citizen complaints were received, Ohio EPA found violations at the site of a barn demolition on a lot adjacent to 6504 North State Route 18 in Clyde Township near Bellevue, where illegal open burning and illegal disposal of solid waste occurred on July 17, 2009. Additional violations occurred at 12905 East County Road 58, Bloomville Township on March 31, 2010. Ohio EPA also documented burn sites at Brice's rental property at 2939 Knauss Road, Bucyrus Township, where evidence included remnants of burned plastics, metal cans, chain oil containers and barrels.

Mr. Harrod owns the property at 4515 Fairground Road, Jefferson Township, Mercer County. Ohio EPA received a complaint about open burning on the property on June 25, 2010. Agency staff discovered an 18-foot diameter burn site that was used to burn 15 large tires, aluminum cans, glass bottles and household trash that included plastics.

Each burn site was located within 1,000 feet of an inhabited residence on a neighboring property, in violation of Ohio rules. At least two burn sites also contained material that is illegal to open burn.

Ohio's open burning regulations define restricted areas and unrestricted areas. Restricted areas are:

- all areas within the boundaries of a municipal corporation;
- areas extending 1,000 feet beyond the boundaries of any municipal corporation with a population of 1,000 to 10,000; and
- areas extending up to one mile beyond the boundaries of any municipal corporation with a population greater than 10,000.

Unrestricted areas are all remaining areas. Regulations for open burning in restricted areas are much more stringent than for open burning in unrestricted areas. Open burning regulations prohibit burning of garbage, wastes containing petroleum products and rubber, items containing grease, plastics, auto parts, coated wires and dead animals throughout the state. Also, plant matter such as tree trimmings, stumps, brush and leaves may be burned in an unrestricted area but cannot occur within 1,000 feet of the nearest inhabited residence on a neighboring property.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources also has certain [rules for open burning](#).