



# Yavapai County

[www.regionalinfo-alert.org](http://www.regionalinfo-alert.org)

[www.facebook.com/ycoem](https://www.facebook.com/ycoem)

928-771-3321

## Preparedness Information Disposing of Firewood Ashes Safely

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2014

### Proper Disposal of Ashes

Even though a fire may *appear* to be out, embers and ash can remain hot enough to start a fire days after you think the fire is out. Re-ignition from smoldering fireplace ashes continues to be the cause for deaths and injuries. **To be safe**, simply treat all ashes and coals as hot, even when you think they had time enough to cool. Proper disposal of fireplace ashes and hot embers is important to prevent fires.



When you clean your fireplace, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. You should always place discarded fireplace ashes in a heavy metal container, moisten the ashes, and cover the container with a metal lid. **NEVER USE** a paper bag, a cardboard box, or a plastic trash bag in the cleaning process. **NEVER USE** a vacuum cleaner to pick up ashes.
2. Wood ash is a strong alkaline (like bleach) and should be handled with caution. Wear eye protection, gloves, and a dust mask while handling, and avoid windy conditions. Make sure ashes are completely "burned out" and cool before collecting them for use.
3. Ashes should be kept in a metal container outside, away from the house, in a cleared area to cool. Your garage, house, or deck are dangerous locations for ashes to cool. After ashes have cooled in a metal container, it is necessary to find a suitable disposal site. **Never dump fireplace ashes until they have had at least four days to cool.** Even after four days, great care should be given in selecting a dump site. Wooded areas should always be avoided.
4. The best way to ensure the ashes are not going to reignite is by submerging them in water. One such method is to submerge fireplace ashes by using a large steamer pot. Using a metal spoon, stir the ashes to break up the clumps. Once the ashes and logs have been soaked, carefully lift the center pot out, and safely dispose of the ashes in a container to be thrown out. The remaining liquid can be poured into a garden or flower bed.

### Proper Disposal of Fireplace Ashes

Garden areas or flower beds could be a possible location to dump the liquid from the soaked fireplace ashes allowing many nutrients to return to the soil. It can potentially be a fertilizer, a soil amendment, or as an insect repellent. **Please survey the area and evaluate any additional hazards before disposing of your ash liquids or four day cooled ashes.** Make sure all dry leaves have been removed

from the area before dumping it into either a garden or flower bed that is away from the house, and remember to moisten the area. To read more details on what to check for when adding ashes to your gardens: [Ashes as Fertilizer](#)

Ashes from charcoal grills should **never** be used in the garden due to the chemical residues left by processed charcoal.

Did you know that wood ash gives traction to icy or snow-covered walkways? That's welcome information, particularly for gardeners, who know too well how commercial de-icing products may damage lawns and plantings. Also, if the car gets stuck, sprinkling cold ash in front of and behind tires can help them grip.

If you have any questions related to fireplace ashes, or other fireplace related questions, please check with your local fire district or chimney specialist.

**For more information visit: [www.regionalinfo-alert.org](http://www.regionalinfo-alert.org)**

**It's Too Late, When Told To Evacuate!**

**Yavapai County contact for questions regarding this press release: Marcie Slay  
(928) 771-3321 [marcie.slay@yavapai.us](mailto:marcie.slay@yavapai.us)**

- ### -