ARDC Burning and Open Fire Policy

During the past few years, several changes have been made in federal and state law involving the burning of materials by open fire or within engineered incinerators. This policy does not apply to incinerators. Destroying material by incineration is a highly regulated activity requiring construction and operating permits. A modification to an existing incinerator or the purchase of an incinerator requires approval by UNL Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) prior to modification or purchase.

This policy pertains to burning and open fires on the ARDC property. This issue first surfaced during an environmental audit of the ARDC by EHS in 1996 whereby EHS raised a concern about the burning of trash, wood, feed sacks and seed sacks. EHS determined that the only materials that the ARDC could burn as allowed by NDEQ regulation were agriculturally-related materials and trees, shrubs or vegetation provided the fire did not create a nuisance or traffic hazard and the materials burned originated on the ARDC property. These regulations are contained in the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality’s (NDEQ) Air Quality Regulations, Title 129, Chapter 30. Since the ARDC had previously burned other materials, the ARDC Director applied for a permit from the NDEQ to allow the burning of non-treated wood and feed sacks. The application was denied.

Burning of seed and feed sacks, wood products and other materials is fairly common in rural areas even though it is against the law. The ARDC employees and managers may not be aware that burning of these materials is illegal. **The penalties for illegal burning may be very high and are an embarrassment to the University of Nebraska.** In order to eliminate the potential for illegal burns on the ARDC property, the following procedure shall be followed:

A request for open burning form (see attached ARDC Internal Open Burning Request form) shall be completed by the person responsible for the burn working with the Unit Manager responsible for the area to be burned. The person responsible for the burn shall sign the form indicating that they understand the process and will follow the requirements of both the burn permit (from the fire department) and the ARDC Internal Open Burning Policy. The request shall be approved by the Unit Manager responsible for the area to be burned. The request then shall be approved by the ARDC Director, or in the absence of the Director, the ARDC Assistant Director, Facilities Manager, or ARDC Farm Operations Manager. The only materials that can be burned are agriculturally-related materials (i.e., empty pesticide containers) where disposal by burning is recommended by the manufacturer and the materials were used on the ARDC property, trees, shrubs or vegetation indigenous to the ARDC property.

A copy of the burn permit from the Fire Department shall be attached to the ARDC Open Burning Request form.
After the ARDC Internal Open Burning Request has been approved and a burn permit issued by the Mead Fire Department, the person responsible for the burn must notify the Unit Manager responsible for the burn area. Together they will jointly decide the day and time the burn shall take place taking into account wind conditions, potential for the fire to escape and other pertinent control measures. When a decision has been made to burn, the Unit Manager shall notify the Saunders County 911 Dispatcher in the Saunders County Sheriff’s Office at 443-1000 and the ARDC front office at 624-8000 prior to burning. The information given shall include the day, time, location and duration of the burn. This will ensure compliance with any burning bans that are in place. Please note that the Saunders County Dispatcher will tell you if a ban on open burning is in place for that day.

The person responsible for the burn shall be responsible for ensuring the fire stays under control. **Under no circumstances shall a fire be left unattended.**

Reports of non-approved open fires or illegal fires shall be reported immediately to the ARDC Director. The Director shall determine if a violation of ARDC Policy and/or the law has occurred. If a violation has occurred, the ARDC Director shall notify the relevant Department Head of the infraction and discuss measures to ensure this does not reoccur. **A violation of this Policy and/or the law shall be noted in the responsible employee(s) personnel file.**

If the ARDC Director determines a violation of the law may have occurred, the Director shall immediately notify EHS who shall determine appropriate further action.
ARDC Internal Open Burning Request

Burn Date________________________ Contact Phone No. ______________________________

Fire Supervisor Responsible for the Open Burn___________________________________________

Unit Manager Responsible for Area____________________________________________________

Location of Burn____________________________________________________________________

List Material to be Burned________________________________________________________________

Required Protocol for Burn

➢ Obtain a Burn Permit from the Mead Fire Department (available at Bank of Mead).
➢ Complete the ARDC Internal Open Burning Request Form and make sure it is signed before starting a burn. Provide copy of form to ARDC Front Desk.
➢ Check to ensure forecast weather conditions are favorable for burn. (winds <15 mph, etc)
➢ Check to ensure wind direction and smoke will not cause a safety concern.
➢ Notify Unit Manager responsible for the area to be burned.
➢ **Notify County Dispatcher at 443-1000** immediately prior to the burn giving the location, date and time and duration of the burn.
➢ **Notify ARDC Front Desk at 624-8000** regarding location, date and time of burn prior to the burn. ARDC Units will be sent a voice mail message informing them of the Unit conducting the burn, burning location, date and time of burn.
➢ Ensure fire management and precautions are implemented to contain the fire.
➢ Ensure fire is completely put out before leaving the site or the ARDC. **Notify ARDC Front Desk with ending time of burn.**
➢ Signature indicates that applicable laws and policy will be followed during the burn.

➢ Signed __________________________________________ Date________________
  Fire Supervisor

➢ Signed __________________________________________ Date________________
  Unit Manager

Request Approved by____________________________________ Date________________
  ARDC Director, Asst. Director, Facilities Manager, or Farm Operations Manager

Office Use Check List

➢ Receptionist sends a voice mail message to the Units informing them of the Unit conducting the burn, burning location, date and time of burn. **Actual Burn Date** ______________________
➢ Receptionist records the beginning and ending time of burn on this form.
  **Time Burn Started** ____________ **Time Burn Ended** ______________
➢ Copy of form sent to Todd Schimelfenig with the Carbon Sequestration Project.
➢ Copy of form to Unit Manager responsible for burn.
➢ Original request to be placed in Marnie’s “IN” box for filing under 909.