



Frequently asked Questions

Q 1: When should a private landowner undertake prescribed burning?

A 1: Prescribed burning can be a safe and cost-effective method of reducing fuels, vegetation and leaf litter that could contribute to a wildfire, across a broad landscape. Private forest landowners or lessees (also known as “applicants” or “applicant”) should consider whether prescribed burning could be used as a management tool to reduce fuels if:

- There exists a heavy fuel accumulation and the woodland is vulnerable to wildland fire; and
- The burn will help to reduce wildfire risk.

However, no application should employ prescribed burning as a land management tool if:

- Such burning is prohibited by local ordinance;
- The applicant lacks the resources and skills necessary to carry out and complete the burn safely; or
- The potential burn site is not accessible for fire vehicles and equipment.

Q 2: What kind of options are available for a landowner to conduct a prescribed burn on their property ?

A 2: There are three options an applicant can choose to implement a prescribed burn on the applicant’s property:

- Obtain a permit to implement him or herself (free)
- Hire a qualified professional (at whatever the qualified professional charges)
- Request the services of the NJ Forest Fire Service (FFS) staff (nominal fee)

Q 3: If an applicant does not feel comfortable implementing a prescribed burn him or herself, can someone conduct the burn for the applicant?

A 3: Applicants who are uncomfortable conducting a prescribed burn should or who don’t meet the minimum recommendation training and experience for conducting a prescribed burn should either hire a Qualified Professional or apply to have the FFS staff facilitate the burn.

Q 4: Does a private landowner need to obtain liability insurance to conduct a prescribed burn on his or her property?

A 4: The FFS recommends that the applicant obtains liability insurance with specific coverage for prescribed burning, although it is not required to obtain a prescribed burning permit. The applicant is responsible for the full implementation of the burn.



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Q 5: Is a permit required to conduct a prescribed burn? If so how much does it cost?

A 5: Permits are required to conduct prescribed burning according to the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection’s Air Quality regulations. N.J.A.C. 7:27-2 defines the Control and Prohibition of Open Burning and authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection to issue a permit for Prescribed Burning under an approved plan by and under the control and supervision of the Forest Fire Service .

There is no fee associated with applying for a permit. The only requirements are that applicants have a prescribed burn plan approved by the NJ Forest Fire Service and, if a landowner does not plan to implement the burn him or herself, the burn must be conducted by a qualified professional or the FFS.

Q 6: How does one apply for a prescribed burn permit?

A 6: An applicant must first decide if the applicant wants to conduct the burn him or herself, hire a qualified professional, or have the FFS assist the applicant. Regardless of who conducts the burn, responsibility for the proper conduct of the burn resides with the applicant. Each application requires a different level of detail and documentation. The following types of prescribed burn permit applications are available to private landowners.

1. Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn Application

To apply for a Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn Permit where the applicant does not require assistance with the prescribed burn, the applicant shall, no less than thirty (30) days prior to the planned implementation of the prescribed burn:

- a. Check local ordinances for restriction on open burning;
- b. Prepare the **Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn Application** and a detailed Prescribed Burn Plan (see the application for details). FFS personnel will provide technical assistance for the development of the Prescribed Burn Plan free of charge to landowners who meet the requirements and wish to conduct their own burns;
- c. Provide documentation that the applicant has the prescribed burning training and experience requirements (see the application for details); and
- d. Submit the application form, together with the completed Prescribed Burn Plan, and the documentation of training and experience to the appropriate Division Field Office no less than 30 days prior to the planned burn.



2. Forest Fire Service Implemented Prescribed Burn Application

Applicants may apply for a permit and authorize the FFS to provide technical and operational assistance. A nominal fee will be assessed for burns that are **completed** by the FFS. To apply for a FFS Implemented Prescribed Burn Permit, the applicant shall:

- a. Completed and sign a **Forest Fire Service Implemented Prescribed Burn Application** form and the Prescribed Burning Agreement; and
- b. Submit the completed forms to the appropriate Division Field Office no later than October 1st.

Note. If you are a municipal, county or federal government agency, please contact the appropriate Division Field Office for specific application instructions pertinent to your type of agency.

3. Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burn Application

An applicant may apply for a permit authorizing him or herself to carry out a prescribed burn with the assistance of a qualified professional. A qualified professional is a person who, at a minimum, meets the prescribed burning training and experience requirements set forth in the **Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burn Application**. The qualified professional may implement all or part of the burn, but the applicant is legally responsible for the activity.

To apply for a **Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burn Permit**, the applicant shall:

- a. Complete a Prescribed Burn Application Form;
- b. Check local ordinances for restrictions on open burning;
- c. Prepare the Prescribed Burn Plan to be submitted with the application;
- d. Provide a Certification of Training of the Qualified Professional as outlined in **Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burn Application**.
- e. Submit the completed forms to the appropriate Division Field Office at **least 30 days** prior to the planned burn.

Q 7: Why are there two different times an application is due, October 1st versus 30 days prior to the planned prescribed burn?

A 7: The difference is because of the type of permit the applicant is requesting and if the applicant is requesting assistance with the implementation of the prescribed burn.

1. **Landowner Implemented and Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burns** – 30 days is the minimum amount of time that is necessary for the respective Division Field Office personnel to review the completed documents, determine if additional information is



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required, if any amendments to the prescribed burn plan are necessary, and for the Section Warden for that area to schedule a site inspection, if warranted; and

2. **Forest Fire Service Implemented Prescribed Burn** – October 1st is set as a deadline because FFS personnel have other duties such as wildfire suppression and planning for prescribed burning on State owned lands prior to October 1.

Q 8: Can FFS provide technical assistance?

A 8: There are two types of assistance available to applicants, technical assistance (plan development) and operational assistance (burn implementation). The FFS will assist applicants as follows:

1. **Landowner-Implemented Prescribed Burn*** – technical assistance (plan development only).
2. **Forest Fire Service Implemented Prescribed Burn** – technical and operational assistance (plan development, site preparation, and burn implementation).
3. **Qualified Professional Implemented Prescribed Burn*** – technical assistance (plan development only).

*Subject to FFS resource availability.

Q 9: How much does it cost for a Forest Fire Service Implemented Prescribed Burn and what if FFS does not finish the prescribed burn in one day?

A 9: If the FFS implements a prescribed burn for an applicant, the service fee is based on a per acre basis of what was actual treated with prescribed fire at the end of the prescribed burn season. The following scenarios will help with understanding how it works.

Note. A new application will be required each Fiscal year starting July 1st, regardless of what was completed or not completed. The agreement to render services and the applicable payment upon completion of what was planned is only valid for that prescribed burn season.

Scenario 1: If an applicant's land was prepped, the plan was written, and no prescribed fire was implemented, then there is no cost to the applicant.

Scenario 2: If an applicant's land was prepped, the plan was written, and only 25 acres of the 50 acres planned was treated with prescribed fire by the end of the prescribed burn season, then the applicant will only be charged for 25 acres **not** 50 acres.

Scenario 3: If an applicant's land was prepped, the plan was written, and the entire 50 acres planned was treated with prescribed fire, then the applicant will be charged for the 50 acres.

The fee schedule starts with a flat fee and the per acre cost is graduated to decrease with an increase in acres, as follows:



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Prescribed Burning Operational Service Fee Schedule Including Plan Development, Site Preparation and Burn Implementation

	a. ≤25 acres:	\$ 250 flat fee
plus	b. 26 to 50 acres:	\$10/acre
plus	c. 51 to 100 acres	\$5/acre
plus	d. 101 acres and above	\$2/acre

Example Calculations:

The following examples show how the reimbursement amount for FFS operational assistance will be calculated for properties of varying burn area acreages.

Example 1 - Burning of 7 acres with the operational assistance of FFS would cost: \$250 = (flat fee of \$250 for implementation of prescribed burning for ≤25 acres).

Example 2- Burning of 30 acres with the operational assistance of FFS would cost: \$300 = \$250 (flat fee of \$250 for the first 25 acres) + \$50 (5 acres x \$10/acre).

Example 3- Burning of 90 acres with the operational assistance of FFS would cost: \$700 = \$250 (flat fee of \$250 for the first 25 acres) + \$250 (25 acres x \$10/acre) + \$200 (40 acres x \$5/acre).

Example 4- Burning of 1,200 acres with the operational assistance of FFS would cost: \$2,950 = \$250 (flat fee of \$250 for the first 25 acres) + \$250 (25 acres x \$10/acre) + \$250 (50 acres x \$5/acre) + \$2,200 (1,100 acres x \$2/acre).