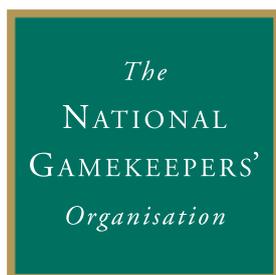


The Heather and Grass Burning Code 2007

Best Practice Guide 1:
How to produce a
Burning Plan





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How to produce a Burning Plan

Purpose of Guide

1. The Heather and Grass Burning Regulations were updated in 2007 to cover the basic legal requirements that burners should meet. An updated Heather and Grass Burning Code was also launched, aiming to describe a standard of good practice and to raise awareness of the relevant laws, helping burners to burn safely and in ways which can benefit the environment. Paragraph 7 of the Code recommends that all burning should be carried out in accordance with a written burning plan. This guidance summarises the basic information that should be included in a burning plan. In some circumstances more detailed plans will be appropriate and may, for example, be required under agri-environment agreements.

Purpose of burning plans

2. Burning plans should build on the principles set out in the Code. Their overall purpose is to ensure that burning takes place safely and does not damage the environment including historic environment features. Their aim is to plan so as to explain how, when and where you intend to burn. They can be useful in demonstrating to others that you are following the Code and complying with the Regulations.

Structure of a burning plan

3. The five-step approach explained below is a basic form of burning plan and map designed for use on all land that may be burnt. If your land is on a SSSI, Natural England must be consulted unless you have an existing consent. Natural England can work with you to draw up a more detailed plan.

Step 1. Map sensitive areas

Refer to pages 6-7 of the Code for descriptions of sensitive areas and how they should be accommodated. There should be a strong presumption against burning these areas except in special circumstances. For more detailed guidance see burning Best Practice Guide 3 on sensitive areas and the other Best Practice Guides available on the Natural England website (www.naturalengland.org.uk/planning/farming-wildlife/burning/).

You should map the sensitive areas found on your land, ideally on a detailed Ordnance Survey map. List the types of sensitive areas as a key to the map along with the map colour code used, e.g.:

Sensitive area description	Map colour code
peat bog	red
steep slopes	blue

How to produce a Burning Plan

Step 2. Map other no-burn areas and areas requiring particular care as identified in the code

Other areas which will not be burnt and areas requiring particular care as listed on pages 7-8 of the Code should also be mapped and colour-coded, e.g.:

Area description	Map colour code
bracken	yellow
archaeological remains	black

Step 3. Identify the area to be burnt

The area to be included in burning rotations should be mapped and colour-coded (see also step 4 below).

Step 4. Identify the burning rotation to be used

Any areas requiring differing rotations should be identified on the map and a note made of the length of each rotation. This will enable you to calculate the area that you are likely to need to burn each year. These should be colour-coded and included in the map key, e.g.:

Further guidance can be found in the Code (paragraph 14, pages 9-11).

Rotation (years)	Average area to be burnt per year	Map colour code
15	1ha	green
25	0.5ha	purple

Step 5. Communication and co-operation

Identify neighbours and other key contacts that will need to be alerted when burning is to take place and/or in the event of an emergency, ideally listing phone numbers.

Neighbouring landowners and land managers:

Commoners:

Fire Service:

Fire Protection Group:

Local Ranger Service:

Refer to paragraph 16, pages 13-14 of the Code for further guidance.

Further information

4. Information on burning, including electronic copies of the Regulations, the Code, and a range of best practice guides are available on Natural England's website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/planning/farming-wildlife/burning. This also gives contact details for Natural England's regional offices, which can be contacted to discuss burning. Hard copies of the above publications are available from:

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