

## **Summary for Backyard Trash Burning**

Incineration of municipal solid waste in permitted facilities, and the emissions created through this process are controlled by the EPA/MPCA to insure that the amount of dioxins released into the atmosphere are at a safe level for the environment and ultimately the residents.

Open Burning may be convenient and low-cost – but it is highly polluting.

- A pound of waste burned emits 10,000 times the pollutants than that same pound burned by an EPA/MPCA compliant incinerator.
- Dioxins released by just 20 Families burning trash for one year – is equivalent to the city of Seattle, burning their trash through incineration for that same one year.

### **Why are burn barrel emissions higher?**

There are two main reasons for the higher level of air pollution from burn barrels than from incinerators.

- Burn barrels burn at lower temperatures, so materials are incompletely burned.
- Burn barrels are not equipped with the state-of-the-art emission control systems used by incinerators.

Many of the materials burned in barrels (paper, plastic, packaging waste) contain dyes, coatings, and pigments which, when burned, can emit a variety of pollutants. The smoke created from burning these types of household wastes carries toxic materials such as acidic gases, heavy metals and dioxins.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC, also known as vinyl) in trash is a source of dioxins when burned because it is a source of chloride, and chloride is necessary for the formation of dioxins.

- A teaspoon of table salt contains 1,000 times as much chloride as the daily dioxin emissions of a typical incinerator.

Inhaling these substances, or having them contact one's skin, may cause severe health problems including eye and throat irritation, respiratory problems and an increased risk of cancer.