

By Jan Schultz

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Recent snows have upped the number of requests for open burn permits from the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD).

Since the first of the month, seven open burn permits have been issued by IVFD officers for burning trees and brush in rural areas.

Nebraska has a permanent year-round ban on open burning that is set in statute, said Fire Chief Nick Schultz.

That statute gives a local fire chief or his/her designees the authority to waive the ban and issue burn permits, but a number of criteria must be met, according to Schultz.

Amount of moisture, the wind and the area surrounding the spot for the burn are considered, as well as what is to be burned. How the permit-holder will control the fire if it happens to get away from the pile is also important.

What can be burned with that permit is very restrictive, the fire chief added.

"Anything that will put carbon into the air, such as plastics and tires, cannot be burned," he said.

"Really the only thing that can be burned according to the Fire Marshal is untreated wood," he said.

The fire official added that acquiring an open burn permit does not relieve the holder of liability if the fire gets out of control.

The IVFD's authority to issue open burn permits does not include the city limits of Imperial, he added.