

How Far Is Far Enough To Site Your Burnbox?

A Year 2000 Health Study looked briefly at how far a solid waste facility should be sited from houses, so that people weren't bothered by its odors. The Table below lists how many people were bothered, and at what distance their houses were from their dump.

Taking into account the usual wind direction, and other factors, it turned out that the more frequently wastes were burned, the longer the minimum distance was that people had to live to not be bothered by dump odors/smoke. Looking at the last row, even if you locate your facility 8,000 ft away, if you plan on burning wastes frequently, you could still expect about 20 percent of residents to be bothered a lot. **You also need to think about how bad the smoke is.**

The thing is, the second Village (shown in the second row) only burned their wastes every few weeks. But when they burned, there was a lot of waste buildup, and the burn would last for a couple of days with heavy black smoke. So even though it didn't happen often, 70 percent of residents were bothered at least a little by the dump. **When you burn regularly, there is less smoke, the fire can be more controlled, and you can be more careful about what you're burning** because you can pick out big plastics and batteries.

These results are for uncontrolled, unseparated waste burning. While the results probably would be similar for burnboxes, it is likely they would be different for an EPA Regulation-compliant incinerator. If run properly, EPA-compliant incinerators produce odors that are much less noticeable (more importantly, the emissions are generally not harmful). Of course...incinerators are very, very expensive and are hard to run in a small community!

Percent of residents who were living at a given distance from their Village dump, or further, and who were bothered by dump odors/smoke.

Wastes are burned [*] :	At a distance of:	Bothered somewhat	Bothered a lot
Never	2,500 ft	9%	4%
Every 2-3 weeks	3,000 ft	70%	19%
5-6 days per week	8,000 ft	16%	21%

^{*} Generally, uncontained, unseparated wastes were burned in an uncontrolled manner.

Is the New Location Right?

Worksheet to determine the appropriateness of a potential facility location:

Consideration	New Location		
	No	Unclear	Yes
Is the site far enough from town so that odors or smoke are not a problem?			
Is the site far enough from any future development that might take place?			
Is the site far enough from an airport (must be at least 5,000 ft. and 10,000 ft for a jet runway)			
Is the site far enough from the water intake and traditional drinking water sources?			
Does the land need to be used for anything else (if so, could both projects work there)?			
Does the location make sense in terms of convenience, traffic for the most people possible?			
Would the location affect migration patterns of wildlife (e.g. caribou)?			
Would the community feel they needed to change subsistence practices?			
Is the location downstream of important fishing, berry gathering/hunting grounds as much as possible?			
Does the community support the new location?			
Will construction at the site or along the access road affect wildlife or important land?			
Has the old location been considered? The land is already impacted (and probably contaminated), and an access way already exists.			
For burnboxes, is the site convenient to dump ash and does it work for the type of burnbox you have? (e.g., some burnboxes need to be sited at the top of an ash pit to tip the ash out)			