

**STOP
OPEN
BURNING
OF WASTE!**



**Open burning
of waste**



What is open burning of waste?

Open burning is a process in which unwanted waste and materials are incinerated, usually at low temperatures and without the adoption of sanitary or environmental measures to reduce the high impacts it generates.

This practice is popular throughout the world because it is a fast and inexpensive way to reduce waste. However, the consequences are very harmful to the environment and the human health.



WHY DO PEOPLE OPEN BURN?

- Because waste is not effectively managed, people in many parts of the world burn their waste to prevent it from accumulating.
- In dumpsites, when they have exceeded their maximum capacity, people burn the excess or for material recovery.
- In crop fields, people open burn to remove stubble from the previous harvest, renew pastures or savannahs used for grazing or clear orchards prior to harvest.



What measures to take?

The low and middle income countries are likely to have the highest percentage of open burning, due to lack of collection coverage and improper waste disposal methods. The problem may worsen as more waste is produced worldwide. Therefore, the following is recommended:

1. Avoid open burning of waste wherever possible
2. Improve waste collection
3. Improve waste disposal
4. Reduce, reuse and recycle
5. Raise awareness of the dangers of open burning of waste.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Open burning of waste releases a number of toxic pollutants into the air and can also worsen soil, water and food contamination.

Open burning of waste is particularly associated with the emission of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). These include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, dioxins and furans. It also releases significant quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

HEALTH IMPACT

The POPs released by open burning (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, dioxins and furans) are carcinogenic and are harmful to the nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, reproductive and digestive systems.

The impacts of these pollutants can cause severe developmental damage to fetuses, infants and children, who may come into contact with the pollutants, either through their mothers or through exposure to the pollutants themselves.

