

Attachment Q
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Lahontan Region

Required Management Actions for Pile Burning within Waterbody Buffer Zones and Stream Environment Zones under Timber Waiver Category 6

All vegetative management projects that involve pile burning under Category 6 of the Timber Waiver must meet the following requirements. These requirements have been designed to ensure that significant impacts will not occur from those slash piles built or burned within sensitive areas such as Waterbody Buffer Zones and SEZs. Enrollees who cannot meet these specific project requirements must, in their Category 6 Application (Attachment K), provide justification and detailed monitoring and mitigation measures which provide equal protection to these sensitive areas.

For pile burning within an SEZ, complying with these requirements is a condition of eligibility for the exemption, provided in Attachment N, from the Basin Plan Prohibition against the discharge, or threatened discharge, attributable to new development, of solid or liquid waste, including soil, silt, sand, clay, rock, metal, plastic, or other organic, mineral or earthen materials, to SEZs in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Enrollees who cannot meet these requirements within SEZs are not covered under the Basin Plan Prohibition Exemption within this Timber Waiver and must apply for a separate Basin Plan prohibition exemption.

Requirements:

- a. Maintain a minimum 25 foot buffer (no piling or pile burning) from watercourses.
- b. No more than 30% of any acre SEZ/WBBZ acre, or smaller contiguous SEZ/WBBZ area, may be occupied with piles.
- c. No more than 15% of any SEZ/WBBZ acre, or other contiguous SEZ/WBBZ area which is less than one acre, can have burn scars at any time which do not have vegetative recovery, as defined in Attachment A (i.e., not invasive weeds).
- d. All Burn scars must either 1) have native duff, or organic mulch and seed raked into the scar to a minimum 85% coverage as soon as the burn is completely extinguished, or 2) have native duff, or organic mulch and seed raked into the scar to a minimum 85% coverage if the scar does not have vegetative recovery (as defined in Attachment A) within two growing seasons following the burn. The duff or mulch/seed raking is intended to facilitate vegetative recovery of the site, limit the opportunity for invasive species re-colonization of the impacted area, increase natural infiltration, and prevent soil erosion. Project implementers that elect option 2) must monitor burn scars and report on vegetative recovery using Timber Waiver monitoring forms and reporting deadlines until vegetative recovery (as defined in Attachment A) is determined to be adequate by the Water Board Executive Officer.

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- e. Burn scars that exceed either a 25-foot diameter or 500 contiguous square feet shall have native duff, or organic mulch and seed raked into the scar to a minimum 85% coverage. The duff or mulch/seed raking is intended to facilitate vegetative recovery of the site, limit the opportunity for invasive species re-colonization of the impacted area, increase natural infiltration, and prevent soil erosion.
- f. All burn scar raking, whether under option 1) in d. above, or to address large burn scars in e. above, must occur as soon as the burn is completely extinguished. In the event the burn scar and surrounding ground is covered by ice or snow, the required raking must occur by June 1 following the burning.
- g. After initial ignition of piles, but while still burning, allow each pile to be re-piled once (i.e., place large unburned pieces back into the burning pile). Additional re-piling will be allowed if necessary to achieve 80% consumption of the piled material.
- h. When piles are adjacent to aspen trees, re-piling during pile burning must be restricted to one time per pile and hot piling (i.e., don't feed one pile with the material from other piles or ground material) is prohibited.
- i. Areas burned within SEZs and WBBZs must be left in a condition such that waste, including ash, soils, and/or debris, will not discharge to a waterbody.

The following section contains recommendations that are meant to aid project implementers searching for additional example design features for piling and burning in SEZs or WBBZs.

Recommendations:

1. When piling the material, distribute the large wood component (> 9 inch diameter logs) so each pile contains less than 40%, by volume, large wood. A smaller volume of large wood component typically will result in lower burn temperatures and shorter burn durations, thereby minimizing adverse effects to the underlying soil.
2. Prior to pile construction, rake native duff away from the area where the pile will be constructed so that it can be raked back onto the burn scar after burning. This action is intended to ensure that sufficient native duff is available to cover the burn scar after the pile, and any adjacent area that may be subject to fire creep, has been burned.
3. Place piles in a non-linear pattern in each unit where possible.
4. Maximize the distance between piles to the extent feasible, maintaining approximately 20 feet average spacing between piles.

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5. Burn or remove piles as soon as possible, giving preference to those piles within SEZs.
6. Allow fire to creep between piles and into these buffers, maintaining flame lengths of less than 2 feet in height except where sensitive plant occurrences, fens, and the noxious weeds whitetop and cheatgrass are present.