

VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN

LOCAL LAW NO. 6 OF 2026

A LOCAL LAW REGULATING THE USE OF OPEN FIRE PITS WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN

Be it enacted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Watkins Glen as follows:

Section 1. Title

This Local Law shall be known and may be cited as the “**Open Fire Pit Regulation Law of the Village of Watkins Glen.**”

Section 2. Legislative Intent and Purpose

The purpose of this Local Law is to promote public health, safety, and welfare by regulating the use of open fire pits within the Village of Watkins Glen. The Village Board finds that unregulated open burning presents hazards including fire spread, smoke nuisance, and air quality degradation. This law is intended to permit safe recreational fires while preventing conditions that may endanger persons or property or cause public nuisance.

Section 3. Definitions

As used in this Local Law, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

1. **Open Fire** — Any outdoor fire not contained within a structure or appliance designed for such purpose, including but not limited to fire pits, chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and portable fire rings.
2. **Recreational Fire** — An open fire used solely for cooking, warmth, or ceremonial or recreational purposes, where the fire is not larger than three (3) feet in diameter and two (2) feet in height.
3. **Fire Pit** — A permanent or portable structure or receptacle designed to contain a recreational fire, constructed of non-combustible materials such as metal, stone, or masonry.
4. **Property Owner or Occupant** — The person having legal ownership, control, or occupancy of the premises upon which an open fire is kindled.

5. **Fire Chief** — The Chief of the Watkins Glen Fire Department or his/her designee.

Section 4. General Regulations

1. **Permitted Use.** Recreational fires in approved fire pits shall be permitted in all residential districts subject to the conditions of this Local Law.
2. **Size Limitation.** No open fire shall exceed three (3) feet in diameter or two (2) feet in height.
3. **Location.**
 - o (a) No open fire shall be kindled within twenty-five (25) feet of any structure, vehicle, or combustible material.
 - o (b) Fires in approved portable fire pits shall be conducted on a stable, non-combustible surface and shall not be placed directly upon grass, wood decks, or other combustible materials.
4. **Supervision.** All open fires shall be constantly attended by a competent adult until the fire is extinguished. A means for extinguishment (e.g., garden hose, fire extinguisher, or sand) shall be immediately available.
5. **Materials Burned.** Only clean, dry firewood or charcoal may be burned. The burning of leaves, brush, yard waste, construction materials, treated or painted wood, refuse, or any other material emitting toxic fumes or excessive smoke is prohibited.
6. **Wind and Weather Conditions.** No open fire shall be kindled when wind conditions or other circumstances would cause smoke, embers, or flames to create a hazard or nuisance to neighboring properties.
7. **Hours of Operation.** Recreational fires shall be permitted only between the hours of **4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.**, unless otherwise authorized by the Fire Chief.
8. **Prohibited During Burn Bans.** All open fires are prohibited during any period of burn ban declared by New York State, Schuyler County, or the Village Fire Department.

Section 5. Authority to Extinguish

The Fire Chief, Code Enforcement Officer, or any law enforcement officer shall have the authority to order the immediate extinguishment of any open fire that poses a hazard, emits excessive smoke or odor, or is otherwise in violation of this Local Law.

Section 6. Penalties

1. Any person who violates any provision of this Local Law shall be guilty of a violation punishable by:
 - o (a) A fine not exceeding **\$250** or imprisonment for a term not exceeding **15 days**, or both, for the first offense; and

- (b) A fine not exceeding **\$500** or imprisonment for a term not exceeding **30 days**, or both, for any subsequent offense.
- 2. Each day that a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.
- 3. In addition to the above, the Village may pursue civil remedies including injunctive relief.

Section 7. Enforcement

This Local Law shall be enforced by the **Watkins Glen Code Enforcement Officer**, the **Watkins Glen Police Department**, and the **Watkins Glen Fire Department**.

Section 8. Severability

If any provision of this Local Law is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 9. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the **New York State Secretary of State** in accordance with §27 of the Municipal Home Rule Law.