

Hot Ashes, Coals: Safe Disposal

Several times a year residents burn up their trash and/or recycle carts by improper disposal of hot coals or ashes from fireplaces, grills or mobile fireplaces designed for use on decks and patios. The scenario is often similar, "I thought the coals were cool," or "I didn't even think about it . . ."

Even cold appearing coals and ashes from fires can remain hot enough to start a fire for hours and even days after you think the fire is out. The exact amount of time for complete extinguishment and cooling depends on many factors like how hot the fire was, what was burning and how much unburned fuel remains. To be safe, treat all ashes and coals as "hot," even when you think they had time enough to cool.



The damage in these photos resulted from fires caused when hot ashes were placed in a plastic trash cart.

Hot coals can burn the heavy duty plastic trash and recycle cart and even spark a home fire, if the cart is next to the house. Also, if the ashes or coals are not cooled down and end up in a refuse or recycling vehicle, there is the potential to spark a horrific fire inside of the truck.

Also remember when disposing of fireworks that are not totally spent—even those that you think may be a "dud"—the spark of fire maybe still be burning.

To properly dispose of ashes or coals we recommend the following:

- If possible, allow ashes and coals to cool in the area where you had the fire for several days. The fireplace or grill is designed to contain their heat safely.
- When it's time to dispose of the ashes, transfer them to a metal container and wet them down.
- Keep the container outside your home and away from any combustibles until the trash is hauled away.
- DO NOT use galvanized containers as hot coals on the galvanized metal will release noxious fumes.
- DO NOT place other combustibles in the container.
- DO NOT use a combustible container (see photo).



If you have any questions, please contact City Hall at (562) 866-9771 ext. 2140.