

City of Chico Warming Fire and BBQ Regulations – FAQ

1. Can I barbecue in my backyard?

Yes, barbecues are allowed on private property. The new ordinance only restricts barbecues on public property or public rights-of-way. Current Chico Municipal Code [12.18.230](#) regulates barbecues in parks.

2. Can I use a fire pit at home?

Yes, if you meet these requirements:

- It must be on **private property**.
 - It must **not** be used on **Red Flag Warning Days**.
 - It must be in an **open-air area** (not under any cover or roof).
 - It must be at least **15 feet from any structure or combustibles, including vegetation**.
 - It must be made of **steel or stone**, no more than **36” in diameter**.
 - It must be **covered with a non-combustible screen** (openings no larger than ½”).
 - Fuel must be **clean, dry wood or gas**.
 - A **fire extinguisher or other fire suppression tool** must be immediately available.
 - It must **not produce nuisance smoke**.
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3. Where are outdoor warming fires and barbecues now prohibited?

Outdoor warming fires and barbecues are prohibited on:

- Public rights-of-way
- City-owned properties
- Open spaces
- Greenways
- Undesignated areas of the park

4. What are Chico Municipal Code Sections 9.35 and 9.36 about?

These new code sections clarify and expand on existing fire safety requirements in Chico Municipal Code [16R.42.060](#), particularly regulating outdoor warming appliances with open flames and barbecues on public property. Section 9.35 also clarifies the use of warming appliances, which now explicitly allows for the use of steel or stone containers explicitly designed for such use.

5. Why did the City add sections 9.35 and 9.36?

The City of Chico has seen a significant number of fires linked to uncontrolled outdoor open-flame sources.

A substantial portion of the City of Chico has been identified as “High” and “Very High” Fire Risk based on factors such as the amount of fuels, terrain, and weather patterns as assessed in the City’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan ([CWPP](#)) and the Vegetation Fuel Management Plan ([VFMP](#)) as well as Cal Fire’s Fire Severity Hazard Zone Map for the City of Chico.

This ordinance will assist in reducing the risk of unattended or unauthorized use of open flame appliances and BBQs in public spaces.

6. What is a “Red Flag Warning Day”?

These are days designated by the **National Weather Service** when fire conditions are extremely dangerous due to wind, temperature, and low humidity. On these days, using any wood-fueled fire—**even on private property—is prohibited**. Red flag warning days can be checked at the National Water Service website. [Check Red Flag Days](#)

7. Can I get cited for violating these rules?

Yes. The City can issue citations for non-compliance, especially if the fire occurs in a restricted area or during unsafe conditions.

8. Can I have a barbecue on the sidewalk or street in front of my home?

Not without a permit from the City of Chico Public Works. This has not changed with sections 9.35 and 9.36, Chico Municipal Code Chapter [14.50](#) currently regulates the use of streets and sidewalks for public assembly.