



**Bureau of Fire Prevention
Office of the Fire Marshal**

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**New Update to the NJ Fire Code:
Mulch / Combustible Landscape Materials
*Effective: April 15, 2025***

On April 15, 2024, the State of New Jersey Division of Fire Safety adopted the 2018 International Fire Code, New Jersey Edition. Specific new sections 305.6 and 305.7 of the 2018 IFC NJ, will have a one-year period before they become operative.

This change will affect the use of combustible landscape materials or “mulch” in all applications with the exception of owner-occupied, one- and two-family or attached single family dwellings used exclusively for dwelling purposes.

305.6 Landscape Materials.

The use of combustible landscape materials, such as wood-based mulch products, is prohibited in any of the following conditions:

1. Within 18 inches of any building or structure;
2. Within 18 inches of a deck, porch, balcony, or any other portion of the building constructed of combustible material; or
3. Within 18 inches of any designated smoking area defined in section 310.2.

Exceptions:

1. Live plant material such as shrubs, flowers and trees provided that they are not located within 18 inches of the building or structure or beneath a combustible overhang with less than 6 feet of clearance.
2. Non-combustible building or structure exteriors that have no combustible components or trim with less than 3 feet clearance from grade.
3. Fire resistant mulch.

305.7 Existing materials.

This provision shall become operative 12 months after the effective date of these rules, all occupancies subject to this code shall remove all combustible landscape materials that are located within 18 inches of the foundation of any building or structure or in the area of any designated smoking area. This product may be replaced with non-combustible materials such as stone or sand.