



# DRY CONDITIONS SAFETY

## OVERVIEW

### What Does a Burn Ban Mean?

No outdoor burning is allowed except in an enclosure which contains all flames and/or sparks, outdoor burning activities authorized by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), approved ceremonial fires, non-commercial cooking, and prescribed "hot work".

### What is allowed during Burn Ban?

Backyard cook-outs and barbeques are allowed with equipment designed for that purpose, as is welding and other "hot work" performed in accordance with county fire code requirements.

### What are the Penalties for Outdoor Burning under a Burn Ban?

- Violation of the ban is a Class "C" misdemeanor, punishable for up to a \$500 fine. In addition, any person who starts a fire that causes damage to property without the consent of the owner may be charged with Reckless Damage or Destruction, a Class C misdemeanor, or Arson, a felony.
- The county can pursue civil remedies for non-compliance under LGC 352.081 (G)

### Will this Burn Ban affect the sales of Fireworks?

No, based on LGC 352.051 The statute provides that the order must be adopted before June 15 for the Fourth of July fireworks selling season. Harris County had not met the threshold for Burn Ban implementation by that date.

- HCFMO has been communicating with Firework Vendors to have them assist in messaging regarding drought conditions and safe use of fireworks to include attending a public display.

### How Can Residents Help?

- Use extreme caution when cooking outdoors. A small spark or burning ember can ignite dry vegetation. Winds will fan the flames and spread the fire rapidly.
- Remove combustibles within 30 feet of any approved or permitted controlled burn and "hot work." A small, controlled fire can easily spread quickly and become an out-of-control, dangerous fire.
- If you see an unattended fire, call 9-1-1 and notify your local fire department immediately. Even a small fire can spread quickly and threaten people and houses.

### What is used to Initiate a Burn Ban?

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is an indicator used by the Texas Forest Service to relate recent and current weather conditions to expected fire behavior. The KBDI also allows local governments to better understand the impact of drought conditions. Higher KBDI values indicate an increased fire risk due to lower fuel moisture.

Drought conditions generally exist when the KBDI is greater than 575, and a KBDI of 575 - 600 has been the Harris County benchmark to initiate burn bans to reduce the potential for grass and woods fires.

0-200

Soil moisture and large class fuel moistures are high and do not contribute much to fire intensity. Typical of early spring following winter precipitation.

200-400

Fuels are beginning to dry and contribute to wildfire intensity. Heavier fuels will still not readily ignite and burn. This is often seen in late spring or early summer.

400-600

Lower litter and duff layers contribute to fire intensity and will burn actively. Wildfire intensity begins to increase significantly. Larger fuels could burn or smoulder for several days. This is often seen in late summer and early fall

600-800

Often associated with more severe drought with increased wildfire occurrence. Intense, deep-burning fires with extreme intensities can be expected. Live fuels can also be expected to burn actively at these levels.