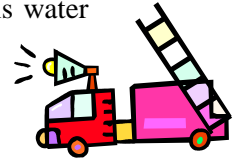


# FAQ'S on Controlled Burning in Denton County

(Frequently Asked Questions about Controlled Burning in Denton County)

If you live in Denton County, you know that your fire protection is neither close nor is water always available to control fires. Controlled burning of vegetation debris is permitted. However, if you choose to dispose of debris by means of controlled burn, please exercise the utmost care and follow all regulations carefully. Be a good and courteous neighbor.



## **I have obtained a burning registration/permit. Do I still have to call the County to report my burn?**

Yes. You have to call the County or log into [www.dentoncounty.com/BurnControl](http://www.dentoncounty.com/BurnControl) to find out if it is “a good burn day.” Occasionally, controlled burns will be prohibited due to danger of wildland fire and/or for purposes of protecting air quality. The decision to allow or restrict controlled burning is made each morning and not before. During ozone season, additional restrictions may apply.



Secondly, the information we record about where you are burning and how to contact you is accessible by the County's 9-1-1 dispatchers. In the event someone phones 9-1-1 to report smoke or flames, the dispatchers can check the burn log for the area. We are attempting to alleviate costly and unnecessary trips made by the local fire departments. However, if a fire department is dispatched to your location and you have your permit, have logged your burn with us, and are burning appropriate materials, you have done all you can do to prevent the emergency response. Sometimes these responses are unavoidable.

## **When would a recreational fire be prohibited? Do I have to report a recreational fire? Is a registration/permit required for a recreational fire?**

During a county-wide burn ban (aka Order Restricting Open Burning) or Disaster Declaration due to drought conditions or periods of high fire danger, recreational fires is strictly prohibited. When a burn ban has been lifted, recreational fires are allowed with certain restrictions. Bonfires do require a permit that is usable one time. Campfires, fires restricted to 2' x 2', in size do not require permits nor do you have to report them to the County. As a courtesy, you can alert your local fire department. Please be mindful of your smoke in evening hour burns; winds usually die down in the evening and campfire smoke does not disperse into the atmosphere as easily and can offend your neighbors.



## **What if I am uncomfortable with the wind speed on a “good burn day”?**

Along with other conditions considered, controlled burning can be allowed when wind speeds are between 6 and 23 mph. If you are uncomfortable with the wind speeds or if you have any concerns about the safety of executing a controlled burn even though the determination has been made to allow controlled burning, by all means, **DO NOT BEGIN A FIRE**. Wind speeds can vary in different areas of the county. However, the decision to allow or restrict burning must apply to the entire county. Always use your own good judgment and never begin a fire that you feel you may not be able to control.

## **Can I call the Sheriff's office to report my controlled burn?**

No. Call 940-349-2840 or log onto [www.dentoncounty.com](http://www.dentoncounty.com).

## **How do I report a neighbor who is violating burning regulations? What if it is not an emergency?**

Call 9-1-1. Any time you have concerns about a fire close to your home, structures, or near animals, contact the 9-1-1 dispatchers. Let them decide whether or not to send the fire department. Your call may be one of several calls received about the same fire and can influence the decision regarding extinguishment. If someone else's smoke is causing you discomfort, it is within your right to ask to have the burn stopped, if it is possible to do so. Be a courteous neighbor and expect no less from your neighbors.

### How far away from my house must my fire be?

The burn site must be at least 300 feet from residential, recreational, commercial or industrial areas, except if located on the property where the burn is to take place. On your own property, fires in approved containers that are not less than 25 feet from a structure are allowable.

### What are the consequences of burning on a No Burn Day?

Burning on a “no-burn day” is illegal and you can be fined.



### What are the consequences of burning illegal materials?

Burning prohibited materials in a controlled burn is punishable by fines ranging from \$250 - \$2000 or more and possible incarceration.

### Am I liable if my controlled burn accidentally damages another person’s property?

YES! Damage resulting from a fire that you begin is YOUR responsibility. If property is damaged or a life lost because of a fire you started, you can be responsible for damages, fined heavily and/or incarcerated. There may be criminal and civil charges filed.



### Is a registration/permit required for outdoor welding?

Only when a county-wide burn ban is in place for drought conditions or extreme fire danger.

### How will I know if it is a good burn day or if burning is prohibited?

Call 940-349-2840 and listen carefully to the voice mail message. It will guide you to learn if it is a “good burn day” and if so, will prompt you to leave your permit number, your name, your address, etc. Or you may log onto [www.dentoncounty.com](http://www.dentoncounty.com) and click on Controlled Burning on the home page. You may enter your contact information online. During the week when the Emergency Services Office is open, you may reach one of the staff members to answer questions or to log your burn. You may use the automated voice mail system during the week also. The Denton County Sheriff’s Office will no longer be taking calls regarding controlled burn information.



### When you call, you’ll hear:

Sorry, today is not a burn day. Thank you. Goodbye.

**-OR-**

Today is a burn day. Please record your information when prompted.

- At the tone, say your permit number and press the “#” (pound) key.
- At the tone, say your name and press the “#” (pound) key.
- At the tone, say your address including the nearest city then press the “#” (pound) key.
- At the tone, say your phone number and press the “#” (pound) key.
- At the tone, state what you will be burning and press the “#” (pound) key.



**You’re finished! Have your burn extinguished before dark and have a safe burn!**

# Definitions

**Approved Container.** A non-combustible receptacle of sufficient integrity to maintain contents and fire in a controlled state.

**Fire Code Official.** The Denton County Fire Marshal.

**Denton County Emergency Services.** The Office of the Fire Marshal, Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

**Denton County Fire Code.** The codes and standards known as the *International Fire Code*, 2009 Edition, including Chapter 47 Referenced Standards, and Appendices' B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J as published by the International Code Council (ICC), except for the portions that have been made as additions, insertions, deletions or changes in the Amendments to the *International Fire Code* and any other referenced codes and standards.

**Department of Fire Prevention.** The Denton County Fire Marshal Office as a division of Denton County Emergency Services.

**Jurisdiction.** The unincorporated areas of Denton County, Texas.

**No Burn Day.** When atmospheric and ground conditions are unfavorable for controlled burning, for a 24 hour period beginning at sunrise, as determined by the Denton County Fire Marshal Office or a duly authorized agency.

**Order Restricting Outdoor Burning.** Denton County Commissioner's Court has determined that the circumstances present in the unincorporated area of the county create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning. The Order bans all outdoor burning in the unincorporated area of the county for seven (7) days from the date of adoption. This order does not prohibit outdoor burning activities related to public health and safety that are authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for (1) firefighter training; (2) public utility, natural gas pipeline or mining operations; or (3) harvesting of agricultural crops.

**Recreational fire.** An outdoor fire not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes. Recreational fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet (7.62m) of a structure or combustible material on your own property or 300 feet of a neighboring property. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet (7.62m) of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

**Bonfire.** A bonfire is a fire larger than a camp fire (2 x 2 feet) and is conducted strictly for recreational or celebratory purposes. It may take place during the day or in the evening. Contact the Fire Marshal's office for more information on bonfires.

**Attendance.** All open burning fires shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished with no remaining embers. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with Section 906 of the *International Fire Code*, 2009 Edition with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization. The fire-extinguishing equipment that is available on site shall be appropriate for the size of the fire.

**Location.** The location for open burning shall not be less than 300 feet (91.44m) from any structure, and provisions shall be made to prevent the fire from spreading to within 300 feet (91.44m) of any structure.

Exceptions:

1. Fires in approved containers that are not less than 25 feet (7.62m) from a structure.
2. The minimum required distance from a structure shall be 25 feet (7.62m) where the pile size is 3 feet (914mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610mm) or less in height.

**Trench Burns.** Trench burns shall be conducted in air curtain trenches and in accordance with the State requirements for trench burns. Contact the Fire Marshal for more information on conducting trench burns.