

Open Burn Program



General Information

This procedure addresses the requirements for any outdoor, open, or prescribed burn as permitted under Texas A&M University Standard (TAMU) Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M7.03 – *Safe Use of Outdoor Fires*.

Applicability

This procedure applies to any outdoor, open, or prescribed burn as permitted under Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M7.03 – *Safe Use of Outdoor Fires* on the campuses of Texas A&M University and Texas A&M University System RELLIS Campus.

Definitions

- 1. Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)** – An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure (Specifically TAMU EHS-FLS)
- 2. Extinguished** - The absence of any visible flames, glowing coals, or smoke
- 3. Landclearing Operation** – The uprooting, cutting, or clearing of vegetation in connection with conversion for the construction of buildings, rights-of-way, residential, commercial, or industrial development, or the clearing of vegetation to enhance property value, access, or production; It does not include the maintenance burning of on-site property wastes such as fallen limbs, branches, or leaves, or other wastes from routine property clean-up activities, nor does it include burning following clearing for ecological restoration
- 4. Neighborhood** – A platted subdivision or property contiguous to and within 300 feet of a platted subdivision
- 5. Practical Alternative** – An economically, technologically, ecologically, and logistically viable option.
- 6. Prescribed Burn** – The controlled application of fire to naturally occurring vegetative fuels under specified environmental conditions and confined to a predetermined area, following appropriate planning and precautionary measures
- 7. Structure Containing Sensitive Receptor(s)** – A manmade structure utilized for human residence or business, the containment of livestock, or the housing of sensitive live vegetation. The term “man-made structure” does not include such things as range fences, roads, bridges, hunting blinds, or facilities used solely for the storage of hay or other livestock feeds. The term “sensitive live vegetation” is defined as vegetation that has potential to be damaged by smoke and heat, examples of which include, but are not limited to, nursery production, mushroom cultivation, pharmaceutical plant production, or laboratory experiments involving plants.
- 8. Sunrise/Sunset** – Official sunrise/sunset as set forth in the United States Naval Observatory tables available from National Weather Service offices
- 9. Texas A&M University Campuses** – All facilities under the jurisdiction of TAMU AHJ; These include TAMU/TAMUS facilities in Burleson and Brazos County, all TAMU HSC Facilities, and the TAMU HEC McAllen
- 10. Wildland** – Uncultivated land other than fallow, land minimally influenced by human activity, and land maintained for biodiversity, wildlife forage production, protective plant cover, or wildlife habitat

Guidelines

- Any outdoor burning must comply with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regulations and the Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.04.M7.03
- All reasonable safety measures will be followed
- No burning will be allowed within 50 feet of any structure
- Only natural ground cover, brush, trees, etc. may be burned. It is not acceptable to store items for burning at a later date. Open burning may be used as a way to remove brush and other acceptable items only if no practical alternative removal can be used.
- Responsible person(s) must be present during the entire burn, be equipped with adequate firefighting agents, and be able to quickly communicate with emergency personnel

- Burning shall be commenced and conducted only when the wind direction and other meteorological conditions are such that smoke and other pollutants will not cause adverse effects to any public road, landing strip, navigable water, or off-site structure containing sensitive receptor(s)
- If at any time the burning causes or may tend to cause smoke to blow onto or across a road or highway, it is the responsibility of the person initiating the burn to post flag-persons on affected road or highway
- Burning must be conducted downwind or at least 300 feet (90 meters) from any structure containing sensitive receptors located on adjacent properties unless prior written approval is obtained from the occupant with possessory control
- Burning shall be conducted in compliance with the following meteorological and timing considerations:
 - The initiating of burning shall be no earlier than one hour after sunrise. Burning shall be completed on the same day not later than one hour before sunset, and shall be attended by a responsible party at all times during the active burn phase when the fire is progressing. In cases where residual fires and/or smoldering objects continue to emit smoke after this time, such areas shall be extinguished if the smoke from these areas has the potential to create a nuisance or traffic hazard condition. In no case shall the extent of the burn area be allowed to increase after this time.
 - Burning shall not be commenced when surface wind speed is predicted to be less than six miles per hour (mph) (five knots) or greater than 23 mph (20 knots) during the burn period.
 - Burning shall not be conducted during periods of actual or predicted persistent low-level atmospheric temperature inversions.
- Electric insulation, lumber, plastics, non-wood construction/demolition, heavy oils, asphaltic materials, potentially explosive materials, chemical waste, and items containing natural or synthetic rubber shall not be burned
- The *Open Burn Permit* must be maintained on site during the burn(s)
- No burning may occur if a burn ban is in effect for the county in which the burn takes place. Any current Open Burn Permit will automatically be rescinded until such time the burn ban has been lifted

Responsibilities

Applicant

- Apply for the permit and follow the guidelines and rules associated with the Open Burn Program
- Submit an Open Burn Application
- Provide access for site inspection
- Comply with all TAMU Open Burn Guidelines
- Cease all burn operations upon direction by any local fire department or issuance of a burn ban by the Brazos County Commissioners Court

Note: Excerpt from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Chapter 111 - Control of Air Pollution from Visible Emissions and Particulate Matter

- The authority to conduct outdoor burning under this regulation does not exempt or excuse any person responsible from the consequences, damages, or injuries resulting from the burning and does not exempt or excuse anyone from complying with all other applicable laws or ordinances, regulations, and orders of governmental entities having jurisdiction, even though the burning is otherwise conducted in compliance with this regulation.

Environmental Health and Safety

- Coordinate the Texas A&M University Open Burn Program
- Review Open Burn Applications
- Conduct site inspections for all open burn request
- Issue permits
- Make appropriate notifications to the dispatch centers
- Notify the Applicant of any Burn Ban issued by the commissioners court

References

Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M7.03 – *Safe Use of Outdoor Fires*
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality *Outdoor Burning In Texas* – Document RG-049