

# FAQ'S

(Frequently Asked Questions about Controlled Burning in Denton County)

If you live in a rural area of Denton County, you are well aware that your fire protection is not always close nor is water always available to control a fire of any type. If you choose to dispose of debris by means of a controlled burn, please exercise the utmost care and follow all regulations carefully. Be a good and courteous neighbor.

## **Do I need to have a burn permit to burn my own debris?**

Yes, a permit is required for all open burning in the unincorporated county beginning January 1, 2007. Denton County Commissioners and County Judge approved the adoption of a Fire Code for the unincorporated areas of Denton County. This in part helps federal highway funding. These funds could be jeopardized because Denton County no longer meets the air quality standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency. It is necessary to step up the regulation of controlled burning in order to comply with EPA mandates.

## **I have purchased a burning permit. Do I still have to call the county to report my burn?**

Yes. You have to call the county to find out if it is a **good burn day** or if controlled burns will be prohibited that day due to danger of wildland fire or for purposes of protecting air quality. The decision to allow or restrict controlled burning is made each morning approximately 8:00 A.M. The decision is based not only on weather conditions and moisture in vegetation but also on factors contributing to air quality. Allowable wind speeds range from 6 mph to 23 mph. Any less and the smoke from a controlled burn will not disperse into the atmosphere and more than 23 mph could pose a fire risk to the surrounding areas.

Secondly, the information we take from you about where you are burning and how to contact you is made available to the County's 9-1-1 dispatchers. In the event someone phones 9-1-1 to report smoke or flames, those dispatchers can check to see if a controlled burn has been logged in the area. If so, and if time allows, you could receive a call from the 9-1-1 dispatchers checking to see that you have your burn under control. This is an attempt to alleviate costly and unnecessary trips made by the local fire department to your location.

## **When would a recreational fire be prohibited? Do I have to report a recreational fire?**

It is mandatory that you report recreational fires. This is a courtesy to let the county 9-1-1 dispatchers know you will be having a fire after sundown. If you can, let your local fire department know, as well. During a county-wide burn ban or disaster declaration due to draught conditions or periods of high fire danger, recreational fires are strictly prohibited.

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

If you are uncomfortable with 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 CONTROLLED BURN**. Wind speeds vary in different locations in the county – always use your own good judgment and never begin a fire that you feel you may not be able to control.

## **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 your 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 for a fire to be extinguished. 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.

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

Burning on a "no-burn day" is illegal. Burning prohibited materials in a controlled burn is also illegal. Burning illegally is punishable by fines ranging from \$200 - \$2000 or more.

**How am I liable if my controlled burn accidentally spreads and damages another person's property?**

Damage resulting from a fire you start is your responsibility. If property is damaged or a life lost because of a fire you began, you can be fined heavily, incarcerated or both.

**Do I call the sheriff's office or the fire marshal's office?**

When you call to find out if it is a burn day and to log a burn, your information is collected for the benefit of the county's 9-1-1 operators. It is required that an individual verify if it is a good burn or not a burn day. This may be done by calling our office at 940-349-2840, a recording will introduce the fire marshal office and state whether it is a good burn day or not a good burn day. The individual will leave their information on the recorder for logging purposes. They should leave their name, address, contact number and permit number. If individuals have the internet available to them they can go to <https://www.dentoncounty.com/BurnControl> and verify for a burn day or no burn day. Their information may also be logged for burning on a good burn day. Individuals that live in the un-incorporated areas of Denton County, this includes Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJ), are required to obtain or have a open burning permit approved from the Denton County Fire Marshal Office. Include the permit number when open burning is logged on the web site or called into the office recording. Individuals that live within the city limits should contact their city official to determine if open burning is allowed in the city and if a burn permit is required for open burning within the city limits.