



GRAYSON COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

POLICY & PROCEDURES OF THE GRAYSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT RELATING TO CONSIDERATION OF OUTDOOR BURNING PROHIBITIONS *[also known as Burn Bans]*

THIS DOCUMENT SHALL SERVE AS *APPENDIX 4 TO ANNEX F, FIREFIGHTING ANNEX*, AND AS *APPENDIX 7A TO ANNEX U, LEGAL ANNEX*, OF THE GRAYSON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF GRAYSON COUNTY AND ITS CITIES: BELLS, COLLINSVILLE, DENISON, DORCHESTER, GUNTER, HOWE, KNOLLWOOD, POTTSBORO, SADLER, SHERMAN, SOUTHMAYD, TIOGA, TOM BEAN, VAN ALSTYNE, WHITESBORO, AND WHITEWRIGHT.

PURPOSE

Texas Local Government Code §352.081 provides for the Regulation of Outdoor Burning by a Texas County Commissioners Court. The Commissioners Court of a County by order may prohibit or restrict outdoor burning in general or outdoor burning of a particular substance in all or part of the unincorporated area of the County if:

- (1) Drought conditions have been determined to exist through the use of the Keetch-Byram Drought Index or, when that index is not available, through the use of a comparable measurement that takes into consideration the burning index, spread component or ignition component for the particular area or upon determination by the Texas Forest Service.
- (2) The Commissioners Court makes a finding that circumstances present in all or part of the unincorporated area create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning.

Sample Orders are outlined in Annex U, the Legal Annex to the Grayson County Emergency Management Plan.

However, it is Grayson County Commissioners Court desire to define a process by which the consideration of the regulation of Outdoor Burning by such an Order is placed on the agenda of the Court.

POLICY

It shall be the responsibility of the Grayson County Emergency Management Coordinator to monitor the Keetch Byrum Drought Index (KBDI). The KBDI is an index used to determine forest fire potential. The drought index is based on a daily water balance, where a drought factor is balanced with precipitation and soil moisture (assumed to have a maximum storage capacity of 8-inches) and is expressed in hundredths of an inch of soil moisture depletion. The drought index ranges from 0 to 800, where a drought index of 0 represents no moisture depletion, and an index of 800 represents absolutely dry conditions. At the time this Policy is promulgated, this index is derived from ground based estimates of temperature and precipitation derived from weather stations and interpolated manually by experts at the Texas Forest Service (TFS) for counties across the state.

At any time the KBDI for Grayson County reaches 650 or greater, or is forecast to reach 650 or greater by the following Monday, the Grayson County Emergency Management Coordinator shall submit an agenda item requesting consideration by the Court of an Order Prohibiting Outdoor Burning. Such agenda item shall be accompanied by information relative to the request, including without limitation, a statement of the current and summary forecast of the KBDI for Grayson County.

PROCEDURE

Any official, agency, fire department personnel, or member of the public with relevant information, concerns or information requests relative to Orders Prohibiting Outdoor Burning, should contact the Grayson County Emergency Management Coordinator to insure that your information and concerns are made available to all of the members of the Grayson County Commissioners Court.

Outdoor Burning prohibitions, or burn bans as we have all come to know them, are mitigation actions taken by Grayson County to reduce or prevent wildfire threat and occurrence resulting from drought conditions.

Grayson County Emergency Management Coordinator:

Sarah Somers

903-813-4217

somerss@co.grayson.tx.us

100 W. Houston, Third Floor

Sherman, Texas 75090

Effective date: *July 11, 2011 by action of the Grayson County Commissioners Court*
October 8, 2013 revised by change to KBDI threshold for action from 600 to 650