



## **Bexar County Fire Marshal's Office**

203 W. Nueva, Suite 302 | San Antonio, TX | 78207

210.335.0300 | 210.335.0330/f

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Laura Jesse

210.335.0073/o

210.787.9038/m

### **Burn ban for unincorporated Bexar County expired**

The prohibitions on outdoor burning enacted by Commissioners Court in June officially expired Monday. A new ban cannot be ordered because the drought index is not high enough. Until the drought index reaches the threshold set out by law, residents in unincorporated Bexar County will be permitted to conduct outdoor burns.

State law allows counties to enact bans on outdoor burning when the Keetch-Byram Drought Index, or KBDI, reaches 575. The average KBDI reading for Bexar County as of Monday was 465. But acting Fire Marshal Ross Coleman warned that the average has climbed 30 points in just five days and one only has to look to California — where wildland fires have raged for weeks and burned more than 160,000 acres — to see how quickly things can go from bad to worse.

“Even though we have had some much needed rain in the past couple weeks and expect more in the coming days, Bexar County is still very much in a drought. And while the rain is great, it also causes the grass to grow, creating more fuel on the ground for fires when the weather dries up,” Coleman said. “Although it is now OK for residents to burn on their properties, we encourage them to follow safe burning practices and contact us if they need any guidance.”

The Fire Marshal's Office offers these guidelines for safe outdoor burning:

- Initiate and continue the burn only when wind direction and other weather conditions will not cause smoke and other pollutants to have adverse effects to public roads, public areas in general or an off-site structure such as a residence, business, livestock barn or facility or greenhouse.
- If the burning causes or may tend to cause smoke to blow onto or across a road or highway, the person initiating the burn is responsible for posting flag persons on the affected road.
- The burning must be kept downwind of or at least 300 feet from any residence, business or other structures on adjacent properties, unless written approval is received from the occupant of the adjacent property.
- Burning should begin no sooner than one hour after sunrise and must be completed on the same day no later than one hour before sunset.
- The area must be attended by a responsible party at all times during the active burn phase when the fire is progressing. The party attending the fire will be liable for any damages, injuries, or other consequences that may result from burning, even when it is carried out in compliance

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with these regulations.

- Burning should not begin when the wind speed is predicted to be less than 2 miles per hour or greater than 15 miles per hour during the burn period.
- Electrical insulation, treated lumber, plastics, non-wood construction/demolition materials, waste, heavy oils, asphaltic materials, potentially explosive materials, chemical wastes and items containing natural or synthetic rubber cannot be burned.
- Campfires, bonfires and cooking fires are generally allowed, however bonfires require special permission from the Bexar County Fire Marshal's Office.
- Prescribed burning of forest, range, wildland/wildlife management purposes is permitted. Such burning is subject to all of the guidelines and must not negatively affect residences, businesses and other structures.

Residents who have questions or concerns before burning outdoors should call the Fire Marshal's Office for guidance at (210) 335-0300.

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