

# Washington County Outdoor Burning Guidelines

This is only a general summary of portions of the outdoor burning rules pertaining to **homeowners and rural residents**.  
Contact our office or see the outdoor burning rules for more specific information.

**Outdoor burning must be conducted in compliance with the outdoor burning rules.**

**Restrictions such as county burn bans and local ordinances prohibiting burning inside city limits must also be met.**

It is requested that you notify Washington County 911 at (979)277-7373 prior to burning

## Outdoor Burning is Allowed for

- Recreation, ceremony, cooking, and warmth (such as campfires, bonfires, and cooking fires).
- Disposal of normal domestic waste from a private residence (such as kitchen garbage, untreated lumber, cardboard boxes, clothing, and packaging materials (including plastic and rubber packaging)).
- On-site burning of trees, brush, grass, leaves, branch trimmings, or other plant growth.
- Burning debris created by fence demolition that contains non-insulated wire and untreated wood.
- Disposal of diseased animal carcasses.
- Crop residue burning for agricultural management.
- Prescribed burning for forest, range, wildland/wildlife management, and wildfire hazard mitigation.

## General Requirements for Allowed Outdoor Burning

- Burning must be outside city limits except where the city has enacted ordinances which permit burning.
- The burning must not cause a nuisance or traffic hazard.
- Burning may only be conducted when wind direction and other weather conditions are such that smoke and other pollutants will not adversely affect any public road, landing strip, navigable water, or off-site man-made structure used for human residence or business, the containment of livestock, or the housing of sensitive live vegetation unless prior written approval is obtained from the adjacent occupant (not including such things as fences, hunting blinds, or facilities used solely for the storage of hay or other livestock feeds).
- Burning must be conducted in compliance with the following conditions conducive to smoke dispersion:
  - Burning must be initiated during daylight hours, the active burn must end the same day before sunset, and the extent of the burn must not be increased at night. Residual fires and smoldering objects must be extinguished if the smoke creates a nuisance or traffic hazard at night (it is understood that things such as stumps may burn for several days; residual fires and smoldering objects not creating a nuisance or traffic hazard need not be extinguished).
  - A responsible party must attend to the burning while it is active and the fire is progressing (this does not mean someone has to be in attendance once the fire is virtually complete and is not advancing).
  - Burning may be conducted only when wind speed is 6 – 23 mph.
  - Burning may not be conducted during temperature inversions (an effect where the normal decrease in temperature with height switches to the temperature increasing with height. An inversion acts like a lid, trapping pollutants below and allowing them to build up).
- If at any time the burning causes smoke to blow onto a road, it is the responsibility of the person initiating the burn to post flag-persons on affected roads.
- Prior to burning for forest management purposes, the Texas Forest Service must be notified.

## Examples of Wastes that may NOT be Burned

- Tires, shingles, plastic and rubber that is not packaging, insulated wire, treated lumber, furniture, carpet, appliances, non-wood construction/demolition debris, asphaltic materials, chemical wastes, heavy oils, and explosive materials.

**Burning in compliance with the rules does not exempt or excuse the responsible party from the consequences, damages, or injuries resulting from the burning and does not exempt or excuse anyone from complying with all other applicable laws.**

Washington County Environmental Health Department  
Courthouse Annex  
105 West Main Street, Suite 100  
Brenham, Texas 77833  
Phone 979-277-6290 Fax 979-277-6291  
[www.co.washington.tx.us](http://www.co.washington.tx.us)

# Outdoor Burning by Businesses

Business organizations may only conduct outdoor burning in limited circumstances. This is only a general summary of portions of the outdoor burning rules pertaining to **business organizations**. Contact our office or see the outdoor burning rules for more specific information.

Outdoor burning must be conducted in compliance with the outdoor burning rules.

Restrictions such as county burn bans and local ordinances prohibiting burning inside city limits must also be met.

It is requested that you notify Washington County 911 at (979)277-7373 prior to burning

## Outdoor Burning is Allowed for

- On-site burning of trees, brush, grass, leaves, branch trimmings, or other plant growth.
  - Other types of trash or waste materials may NOT be burned.
  - It is ok for a landscaper or any other person authorized by the owner to conduct the burning.
  - The burning must take place on the property where the materials were generated (the materials may not be taken somewhere else and burned unless the next condition is met).
- Burning at a site that is properly designated and operated for consolidated burning of trees, brush, grass, leaves, branch trimmings, or other plant growth generated from specific residential properties.
- Hydrocarbon burning from pipeline breaks and oil spills.
- Firefighter training.
- Disposal of animal remains by veterinarians.

## General Requirements for Allowed Outdoor Burning

- Burning must be outside city limits except where the city has enacted ordinances which permit burning.
- The burning must not cause a nuisance or traffic hazard.
- Burning may only be conducted when wind direction and other weather conditions are such that smoke and other pollutants will not adversely affect any public road, landing strip, navigable water, or off-site man-made structure used for human residence or business, the containment of livestock, or the housing of sensitive live vegetation unless prior written approval is obtained from the adjacent occupant (not including such things as fences, hunting blinds, or facilities used solely for the storage of hay or other livestock feeds).
- Burning must be conducted in compliance with the following conditions conducive to smoke dispersion:
  - Burning must be initiated during daylight hours, the active burn must end the same day before sunset, and the extent of the burn must not be increased at night. Residual fires and smoldering objects must be extinguished if the smoke creates a nuisance or traffic hazard at night (it is understood that things such as stumps may burn for several days; residual fires and smoldering objects not creating a nuisance or traffic hazard need not be extinguished).
  - A responsible party must attend to the burning while it is active and the fire is progressing (this does not mean someone has to be in attendance once the fire is virtually complete and is not advancing).
  - Burning may be conducted only when wind speed is 6 – 23 mph.
  - Burning may not be conducted during temperature inversions (an effect where the normal decrease in temperature with height switches to the temperature increasing with height. An inversion acts like a lid, trapping pollutants below and allowing them to build up).
- If at any time the burning causes smoke to blow onto a road, it is the responsibility of the person initiating the burn to post flag-persons on affected roads.
- Prior to burning for forest management purposes, the Texas Forest Service must be notified.
- Electrical insulation, treated lumber, plastics, non-wood construction/demolition materials, heavy oils, asphaltic materials, potentially explosive materials, chemical wastes, and items containing rubber may not be burned.

**Burning in compliance with the rules does not exempt or excuse the responsible party from the consequences, damages, or injuries resulting from the burning and does not exempt or excuse anyone from complying with all other applicable laws.**

Washington County Environmental Health Department  
Courthouse Annex  
105 West Main Street, Suite 100  
Brenham, Texas 77833  
Phone 979-277-6290 Fax 979-277-6291  
www.co.washington.tx.us