



**TRAVIS COUNTY
EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT 5**

665 W. FM 1626, Austin, TX 78748

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NATHAN MENDENHALL
Fire Code Official / Risk Reduction Officer

TO: Travis County ESD 5 Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 003**
Outdoor Burning Permit/Inspection Process and
Rules for Outdoor Burning

DATE: October 1, 2025

CREATED BY: Travis County ESD 5 Fire Code Official

Purpose:

The Fire Code Official for Travis County ESD 5 (TCESD5) has created this bulletin to assist applicants regarding permit and inspection requirements for outdoor burning within the District. This Information Bulletin incorporates the department's process for submitting applications to the fire code official, electronically through www.tcesd5permits.com and the subsequent inspection.

Code References:

2021 Fire Code of Travis County Emergency Services District 5 / Manchaca Fire Rescue, published by the ICC (Sections 105.3.34; 307.1-307.5); Travis County ESD 5 Ordinances 2025-08-14-01; 2025-08-14-02; 2025-09-11-01; TCEQ Rules for Outdoor Burning; Texas Clean Air Act.

FAQs:

When is a permit needed? A FREE permit for outdoor burning is needed anytime an outdoor fire exceeds 3 feet in width and 2 feet in height for anything other than a campfire, recreational, or ceremonial fire. The permit is good for one year and will be issued after the burn site is inspected by a fire inspector to ensure compliance with state law and the Fire Code of Travis County Emergency Services District 5.

What is the TCEQ definition of a structure containing sensitive receptors? A man-made structure utilized for human residence or business, the containment of livestock, or the housing of sensitive live vegetation.

Can I burn within 300 feet of a sensitive receptor? Burning can be done within 300 feet of a sensitive receptor IF the burning is done downwind of the sensitive receptor OR written approval is obtained from the occupants of the sensitive receptor prior to the outdoor burning. If wind direction changes during the burn, causing the smoke to carry to the sensitive receptor, then the pile must be extinguished or written approval must be immediately obtained.

Who authorizes outdoor burning in Texas? The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) authorizes burning in Texas through burning exceptions published in the Outdoor Burning Rules which are codified in the Texas Clean Air Act. Violations are criminal in nature, and range from Class C misdemeanors up to felony level offenses.

Why is a permit needed from Travis County ESD 5? A FREE permit is needed as the primary method of ensuring the burn site meets the requirements of the Texas Outdoor Burning Rules, and as the primary notification to the responding fire department (Manchaca Fire Rescue / TCESD5) that a burn is occurring within the District. The permit populates a dashboard at the fire department showing all the Active Outdoor Burning within the District.

Can I burn household (domestic) waste? Yes, but only if it is for a private residence holding three families or less. Waste cannot be taken or brought from any other property to be burned. Domestic waste is limited to kitchen garbage, untreated lumber (no construction debris), cardboard boxes, packaging, clothing, grass, leaves, and branch trimmings. **The following items are always prohibited from being burned: tires, construction debris/treated lumber, furniture, carpet, electrical wire, appliances, other waste not generated from normal life in the residence.** Burning of domestic waste is prohibited during a burn ban unless specific requirements are met.

Can I have a bonfire? Any ceremonial or recreational fire exceeding 3 feet in width and 2 feet in height is considered a bonfire. Bonfires require a permit and inspection by a fire inspector before being lit. Bonfires cannot be located within 100 feet of any structure or combustible material. Bonfires in a fire pit cannot be located within 50 feet of any structure or combustible material.

Are there special instructions for outdoor burning of branch trimmings, grasses, and leaves? Yes. In addition to the rules contained in the Outdoor Burning Rules, burn sites must be located at least 50 feet from any structure. Fires in approved containers with spark arrestors must be located not less than 15 feet from a structure.

What are the requirements for ceremonial, cooking, or recreational fires? These fires are limited to a maximum size of 3 feet wide x 2 feet in height. They do not require a permit. Fires shall not be conducted within 25 feet of a structure or combustible material.

Special Considerations:

What are the consequences of violations? Violations of the Texas Outdoor Burn Rules / Texas Clean Air Act range from Class C misdemeanors with fines of up to \$500 per day to felony level offenses to include jail time and fines of thousands of dollars, depending on the violation. Also, if a person starts any outdoor burn and the fire gets out of control and extends to the property line and ignites another person's fence or structures, the person starting the fire can be arrested and charged with second degree felony arson and face additional criminal and civil penalties.

How to get your FREE one year permit for outdoor burning:

To obtain your FREE outdoor burning permit, which is good for one year, follow these instructions (plan in advance...the process can take 1-2 business days and is not done on weekends or holidays):

- 1) Visit www.tcesd5permits.org
- 2) Click the blue Login or Register button at top right corner
- 3) First time users must register with an email address. Once registered, check your email for a verification email for first time login.
- 4) Login using your email address and password you have setup.
- 5) Choose Apply for a New Operational Permit.
- 6) Select Open/Outdoor Burning
- 7) Complete the required information. Under property name, enter your last name and the word residence (i.e. Smith Residence).
- 8) As you start typing the street name, select the correct street from the auto-populated list. If you live on a newly constructed street and it does not appear, then just enter the street name.
- 9) Once you complete the submission, the fire inspector will call to schedule a site inspection within 1-2 business days of the submittal, sometimes, even the same day. Upon passing the inspection, the permit will be issued for one year.
- 10) The permit and inspection is good for a specific burn location on the property. If the burn location moves, a new permit and inspection is required using the same submittal process.

This policy is effective on the date of this bulletin and will remain in effect until further notice. Your cooperation in implementing this policy is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions on this policy, please call the TCESD5 Fire Code Official's office at 512-640-8273.

Summary:

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

Prepared by: Nathan Mendenhall, Risk Reduction Officer/TCESD 5 Fire Code Official

MANCHACA FIRE / RESCUE



TRAVIS CO. ESD #5



OUTDOOR / OPEN BURNING RULES



**OBTAIN YOUR FREE
OPEN BURNING PERMIT
ONLINE AT [TCESD5.ORG](https://www.tcesd5.org)**



CLICK PERMIT LINK AT TOP

**REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS...
CLICK PERMIT LINK AND SELECT
"OPERATIONAL PERMITS";
SIGN IN OR REGISTER;
THEN SELECT "OPEN BURNING"**

MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE

TRAVIS CO ESD #5

OUTDOOR BURNING ONLY TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- Burning must be conducted downwind of or at least 300 feet from any structure containing sensitive receptors located on adjacent properties unless prior written approval is obtained from adjacent occupant with possessory control.
- Burning shall NOT be conducted when wind is greater than 22 m.p.h. or less than 6 m.p.h.
- The initiation of burning shall commence no earlier than one hour after sunrise.
- Burning shall be completed on the same day not later than one hour before sunset. 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 burn after this time.
- All outdoor burning shall be supervised at ALL times and under controlled conditions. Citizens responsible for controlled burns shall have the means to control/extinguish the burn.
- Burning shall NOT be conducted during periods of actual predicted persistent low-level humidity. (Dry conditions)
- No permit required for campfires and other recreational and ceremonial purposes, the noncommercial preparation of food and for supplying warmth in cold weather (no greater than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height). For all other open burning and/or recreational and ceremonial BONFIRES larger than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height, a permit must be obtained online at **TCESD5.ORG**

- To destroy diseased animals when necessary to prevent the spread of disease.
- Outdoor burning of trees, brush, and other plant growth for the right of way maintenance, land clearing operations, and maintenance along water canals when no practical alternative to burning exists and when the materials are generated only from that property. Structures containing sensitive receptors must not be negatively affected by the burn. Such burning shall be subject to the above conditions.
- Violations can be punishable as a Class C misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$500.00, or can reach felony offense status depending on severity of violation.

DEFINITIONS

Extinguished- The absence of any visible flames, glowing coals or smoke.

Campfire- A fire no larger than 3 ft in diameter and 2 ft in height. For recreational purposes.

Bonfire- Any fire larger than a campfire that is used as a ceremonial or recreational purpose.



PROHIBITED BURN ITEMS

Construction waste, household garbage, tires, rubber or plastic products, heavy oils, fiberglass products, oil based materials, and any material that produces excessive amounts of smoke.

**ALL BURNING IS PROHIBITED DURING
COUNTY WIDE BURN BANS UNLESS AUTHORIZED
UNDER SPECIAL PERMIT.**

The authority to conduct outdoor burning under the above circumstances does not exempt or excuse any person from any consequence, damages, or injuries resulting from burning and does not excuse anyone from complying with all ordinances of other governmental agencies. The above rules shall be enforced by the Travis County Fire Marshal's Office and/or Travis County Sheriff's Office.

**YOUR COOPERATION IS
APPRECIATED IN THIS MATTER**

**For any questions you may have, contact
Community Risk Reduction.**

**Manchaca Fire Rescue
Travis Co ESD #5**

665 W. FM 1626

Austin, TX 78748

512-282-7057 (ext. 112)

TCESD5.org

**Travis County Sheriff's
Non-Emergency Dispatch**

512-974-0845 (Option 3)



TITLE 30 TAC #111.203 DEFINITIONS.

Structure containing sensitive receptors:

A man-made 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 which has potential to be damaged by smoke cultivation, pharmaceutical plant production, or laboratory experiments involving plants.

Burning Trash or Land-Clearing Debris:

Some **Do's** and **Don'ts** to Remember



GET YOUR FREE OUTDOOR BURN PERMIT
ONLINE AT **TCESD5.ORG**

Do's

- ▶ Call your local officials (for example, your city or county code enforcement office, your local fire department, or your city or county environmental health department) to make sure that burning is not against any local law, such as a city ordinance. Also make sure that a burn ban is not in place for your area (to prevent wildfires, counties often ban burning during dry weather).
- ▶ Burn only allowable trash (see below) and land-clearing debris that was generated at the residence.

Don'ts

- ▶ Don't create a traffic hazard: make sure that smoke doesn't blow across roads.
- ▶ Don't burn anything that may create excessive smoke or toxic fumes, such as plastic, tires, or shingles.
- ▶ Don't burn trash or anything else from a business.
- ▶ Don't cause a nuisance: make sure you don't smoke out your neighbors.
- ▶ Don't burn anything during a Burn Ban or during a Red Flag Warning.

When is outdoor burning okay?

To protect the quality of the air we breathe in Texas, the TCEQ rules prohibit outdoor burning anywhere in the state. However, the TCEQ allows for exceptions in specific situations when the burning activity does not pose a health threat or nuisance and is an acceptable practice.

Ceremonial and Recreational Fires

The TCEQ allows bonfires, campfires, and cooking fires, as long as they do not cause nuisance smoke or traffic hazards and as long as special attention is given to safety. Never burn anything on the “Never Burn” list, below.

Waste-Disposal Fires

In some areas of the state where the local government doesn’t provide trash pickup services, outdoor burning is allowed for the disposal of some household wastes. Under certain conditions, you may also burn brush from on-site land clearing.

Are there alternatives to burning?

There are several alternatives that you should explore before you resort to burning. The four principal alternatives are:

- ▶ Recycling
- ▶ Composting
- ▶ Mulching
- ▶ Disposal in local landfills

Are there any items I should not burn?

There are some items that you should never burn, under any circumstances, because such burning would pose a safety or health threat. The basic five “Never Burn” items are listed below:

Never Burn

- ▶ Electrical insulation
- ▶ Tires
- ▶ Treated lumber (such as in construction or demolition waste)
- ▶ Heavy oils or asphalt materials
- ▶ Potentially explosive materials or chemicals

CAUTION

Starting a fire and allowing it to get out of control and damage or destroy the property of another is an arson crime under the Texas Penal Code.

Lifting of the burn ban does not authorize burning of any material that is prohibited from being burned by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Prohibited materials include:

Construction waste, most household garbage, tires, rubber or plastic products, heavy oils, fiberglass products, oil based materials, and any material that produces excessive amounts of smoke.



Manchaca Fire Rescue

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SPANISH VERSION

MANCHACA FIRE / RESCUE



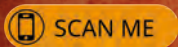
TRAVIS CO. ESD #5



REGLAS GENERALES PARA QUEMAR AL AIRE LIBRE



**OBTENGA SU PERMISO
DE QUEMA AL AIRE
LIBRE GRATUITO EN
LINEA EN [TCESD5.ORG](https://www.tcesd5.org)**



**ELIJA EL ENLACE DE PERMISO
DE QUEMA AL AIRE LIBRE EN LA
PARTE SUPERIOR.**

**REVISAR INSTRUCCIONES...
CLIC EN EL ENLACE
“OPERATIONAL PERMITS” Y
SELECCIONE “OPEN BURNING”.**

MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE

TRAVIS CO ESD #5

La quema al aire libre solo puede ser permitida bajo las siguientes condiciones:

- a quema al aire libre debe llevarse a cabo por lo menos a 300 pies de cualquier estructura que contenga receptores sensibles ubicados en propiedades adyacentes, a menos que se obtenga aprobación previa por escrito del ocupante adyacente con control de posesión.
- NO debe de comenzar a quemar cuando el viento esté por arriba de los 22 mph or menos de 6 mph.
- El inicio de la quema al aire libre deberá de comenzar una hora después del amanecer (no antes).
- La quema al aire libre deberá de completarse el mismo día, a más tardar una hora antes de la puesta del sol. En los casos en que los incendios residuales y / o los objetos ardiendo continúen emitiendo humo después de este tiempo, estas áreas deberán ser extinguidas si el humo que emiten tiene el potencial para crear molestia o una condición de peligro de tráfico. En ningún caso se permitirá la extensión de la zona de quemado después de este tiempo.
- Todas las quemas al aire libre deben ser supervisadas en todo momento y bajo condiciones controladas. Los ciudadanos responsables de quemar deberán de tener los medios para controlar / extinguir la quema.
- La quema al aire libre NO puede llevarse a cabo durante los períodos donde se prevea que la humedad se encuentra en un nivel bajo (condiciones secas).
- No se requiere permiso para fogatas de propósitos recreativos y ceremoniales, como la preparación no comercial de alimentos. Para hogueras mayor de 3 pies de diámetro y 2 pies de altura, se debe de obtener un permiso de quema al aire libre gratuito en línea en **TCESD5.ORG**

- Para la quema de animales muertos cuando sea necesario para prevenir la propagación de alguna enfermedad.
- La quema al aire libre de árboles, arbustos y otros cultivos para el mantenimiento del derecho de vía, operación de limpieza de terrenos y mantenimiento a lo largo de los canales de agua, pueden realizarse cuando no existe una alternativa práctica a la quema y cuando los materiales se generan solamente a partir de esa propiedad. Las estructuras que contienen receptores sensibles no deben ser afectadas negativamente por la quemadura. Estas quemas también deberán estar sujetas a las Reglas anteriores.
- Las violaciones de esta orden serán castigadas como un delito menor de clase C con una multa máxima de \$500.00.

DEFINICIONES

Fuego Extinguido: La ausencia de llamas visibles, carbones encendidos o humo.

Fogata: Un fuego no mayor de 3 pies de diámetro y 2 pies de altura. Para propósitos recreativos.

Hoguera: Cualquier fuego más grande que una fogata que se utiliza como un propósito



Artículos prohibidos de quemar

Residuos de construcción tratados, basura doméstica, neumáticos, productos de caucho o plástico, aceites pesados, productos de fibra de vidrio, materiales a base de aceite y cualquier material que produzca cantidades excesivas de humo.

TODA QUEMA QUEDA PROHIBIDA DURANTE EL PERIODO DE LA PROHIBICION DE QUEMAS EN EL CONDADO.

Si se lleva a cabo la quema al aire libre sin sujetarse a las reglas anteriores, las autoridades no exentaran ni excusaran a ninguna persona de cualquier consecuencia, daños o lesiones resultantes de la quema y no excusaran a nadie de cumplir con todas las ordenanzas de otras agencias gubernamentales. Las reglas anteriores serán aplicadas por La Oficina de Mariscal Incendios de el Condado de Travis.

AGRADECEREMOS MUCHO SU COLABORACION PARA RESGUARDAR SU SEGURIDAD.

Para cualquier pregunta por favor de contactarse a la Oficina de Reducción de riesgos

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TCESD5.org

El Sheriff del Condado de Travis

(no es de emergencia)

512-974-0845 (Option 3)



DEFINICIONES DEL TÍTULO 30 TAC # 111.203

Estructura que contiene receptores sensibles:

Una estructura hecha por el hombre y que es utilizada como residencia o para negocios, para contener ganado, o para el alojamiento de vegetación viva sensible. El término “estructura hecha por el hombre” no incluye cosas tales como cercas, caminos, puentes, instalaciones para la caza o instalaciones utilizadas solo para el almacenamiento de heno u otros alimentos para el ganado. El término “vegetación viva sensible” se define como la vegetación que tiene potencial para ser dañada por el humo como la producción de plantas farmacéuticas o experimentos de laboratorio con plantas.

Quemar basura o desechos de limpieza de tierras:



Lo que debe y no debe hacerse

Cosas que se deben hacer

**OBTENGA SU
PERMISO DE
QUEMA AL AIRE
LIBRE GRATUITO
EN LINEA EN
TCESD5.ORG**

- ▶ Llame a sus funcionarios locales (por ejemplo, la oficina de su ciudad o condado encargada del cumplimiento de códigos, su departamento local de bomberos, o el departamento de salud ambiental de su ciudad o condado) para asegurarse de que el hacer fuego no contravenga ninguna ley local, tal como una ordenanza de la ciudad. Asegúrese también de que no esté vigente una prohibición de fuegos en su área (para prevenir incendios descontrolados, los condados con frecuencia prohíben quemar durante tiempos secos).
- ▶ Queme sólo basura permitida (véase a continuación) y desechos de limpieza de tierras que hayan sido producidos en la residencia.

Cosas que no se deben hacer

- ▶ No genere un peligro de tránsito: asegúrese de que el humo no se esparza sobre calles o carreteras.
- ▶ No queme nada que pueda producir humo excesivo o gases tóxicos, tales como el plástico, llantas o tejas de asfalto.
- ▶ No queme basura ni alguna otra cosa que provenga de un negocio.
- ▶ No cause molestias: asegúrese que no obligue a sus vecinos a salir de sus casas por culpa del humo.
- ▶ No queme nada durante una Prohibición de Fuegos (en inglés, Burn Ban) o durante una Advertencia de Bandera Roja (en inglés, Red Flag Warning).

¿Cuándo se puede quemar al aire libre?

Para proteger la calidad del aire que respiramos en Texas, las reglas de la TCEQ prohíben quemar al aire libre en cualquier parte del estado. Sin embargo, la TCEQ permite excepciones en situaciones específicas cuando la actividad no representa ni una amenaza a la salud ni una molestia y es una costumbre aceptable.

Fuegos ceremoniales y recreativos

La TCEQ permite hogueras, fogatas y fuegos para cocinar, siempre que no causen humo que moleste o peligros de tránsito y siempre que se ponga mucha atención a la seguridad. Nunca queme nada en la lista de "Nunca queme", a continuación.

Fuegos para disposición de residuos

En algunas partes del estado en las cuales el gobierno local no provee servicios de recolección de basura, se permite quemar al aire libre para deshacerse de ciertos residuos del hogar. Bajo ciertas condiciones, también puede quemar maleza proveniente de limpieza de tierras en el mismo sitio.

¿Hay algunas alternativas a quemar?

Hay varias alternativas que debe investigar antes de recurrir al fuego. Las cuatro alternativas principales son:

- ▶ Reciclar
- ▶ Compostaje (en inglés, "composting")
- ▶ Hacer acolchado (en inglés, "mulch")
- ▶ Deshacerse de residuos en rellenos sanitarios

¿Hay artículos que no debo quemar?

Hay algunos artículos que no debe quemar bajo ningunas circunstancias, porque quemar esas cosas representaría una amenaza a la seguridad o a la salud. Los cinco artículos básicos de "Nunca quemar" aparecen a continuación:

Nunca queme

- ▶ Aislamiento eléctrico
- ▶ Llantas
- ▶ Madera tratada (como la que se encuentra en residuos de construcción o de demolición)
- ▶ Aceites pesados o materiales asfálticos
- ▶ Materias o sustancias químicas que puedan explotar

Precaución

Iniciar una quema al aire libre y permitir que el fuego salga de control y dañar o destruir propiedad ajena es considerado un crimen bajo el Código Penal de Texas.

El levantamiento del periodo de la prohibición de quema del condado no autoriza la quema de cualquier material que esté prohibido ser quemado por la Comisión de Calidad Ambiental de Texas.

Estos materiales incluyen:

Residuos de construcción tratados, basura doméstica, neumáticos, productos de caucho o plástico, aceites pesados, productos de fibra de vidrio, materiales a base de aceite y cualquier material que produzca cantidades excesivas de humo.



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