



# Guidelines for Oklahoma's Ban on Outdoor Burning

Issued: July 14, 2011

The following guidelines are related to the Governor's ban on outdoor burning per Executive Proclamation effective **July 14, 2011**. Nothing in these guidelines relieves an individual from responsibility for his or her actions. If the use of fire in contracting, welding, cooking, or for any other purpose results in a wildfire, the individual conducting such activity is responsible for the immediate suppression of the fire, and for damages which might occur from such fire.

As is broadly defined in O.S. Title 2, Article 16, Section 16-26, the term "unlawful burning" is applied to both land cover and point sources such as campfires and trash fires. It also applies to other potential ignition sources for any land-cover fire.

For More Information

**Oklahoma Forestry Services**  
**405-522-6158**  
**[www.forestry.ok.gov](http://www.forestry.ok.gov)**



Two basic principles apply to all of these situations:

1. Individuals are responsible for their actions and the results of their activities; and
2. Reasonable caution must be exercised with respect to the existing high fire danger and extra precautionary measures must be taken to prevent wildfires.

Guidelines and exemptions are outlined below. For more specific information, contact Oklahoma Forestry Services (405) 522-6158.

## **FOR EQUIPMENT RELATED TO ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Equipment which uses propane or other controlled-type burners is generally regarded as safe, however it would be prudent to have a water pumper on standby any time this equipment is used near a grassy right-of-way.

Other types of burners pose a higher risk, particularly if they are of open design or are burning while being transported. If a safety zone wider than the flame length is established, these burners are generally safe. If they are pulled onto a grassy surface, the burner should be extinguished. A concept of "reasonable and prudent" must be applied when using this type of equipment.

## **WELDING/CUTTING TORCH/GRINDING ACTIVITIES**

Outdoor welding or cutting torch activities cause many fires each year, and the ban is intended to prevent wildland fires caused by this activity. In addition to the penalties prescribed in the law for violations of the outdoor burning ban, operators may also be liable for damages caused by a fire, and for the costs of suppressing such fire. Extreme caution is advised. Outdoor welding and cutting torch activities may continue under the following conditions:

1. When conducted over a non-combustible surface of at least 10 feet by 10 feet and when welding blankets or screens are used to cover flammable vegetation; and
2. Wind speeds must be less than 20 mph; and

3. A fire watch, other than the welder, is posted at the welding/cutting torch site with pressurized water or fire extinguisher.

## **OILFIELD AND LANDFILL ACTIVITIES**

Gas vents and flares associated with the extraction of oil and gas or the refining of oil and gas (or other manufacturing processes or landfill operations) are generally considered exempt from the ban as long as the top of the vent pipe is raised well above the surrounding vegetation.

Sludge pits are covered under the ban and should not be burned while it is in effect.

## **STORM AND LAND CLEARING DEBRIS**

Woody debris (limbs, branches, etc.) may be burned under the following conditions:

1. An air-curtain incinerator, which burns the debris in a pit below ground level, must be used; and
2. Department of Environmental Quality Open Burning rules are followed; and
3. The area where the burn is conducted is cleared of vegetation for a 100' radius; and
4. Wind speed is less than 15 mph; and
5. Water and water pumping equipment is on-site.

## **CAMPFIRES AND OUTDOOR COOKING**

Outdoor campfires or bonfires are prohibited. LPG and natural gas grills and charcoal-fired cooking outside in a grilling receptacle are permitted provided that the activity is conducted over a non-flammable surface and at least five feet from flammable vegetation. Coleman-type pressurized stoves are exempt. However, any fire resulting from grilling or the use of one of these cookers or stoves is still an illegal fire.

## **FIREWORKS**

Organized public fireworks displays are allowed under this ban if the public fireworks displays are permitted by a municipality with jurisdictional authority and conducted by trained professionals with approval of the local fire department or State Fire Marshal's Office.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN CEREMONIAL FIRES**

Native American ceremonial fires conducted in Sweat Lodges or over non-flammable surfaces of at least 10 feet by 10 feet are exempt from this Ban.

## **STATE FIRE SCHOOLS AND FIRE TRAINING**

Live burns for firefighter training in conjunction with State Fire Schools and/or Firefighter Academies are exempt from this Ban. The live burns must be held on training grounds located at OSU Fire Service Training Regional Training facilities, regional Career Technology Centers, or Fire Department Training facilities. The burns must also be conducted over non-flammable surfaces and be held in accordance with Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality rules.

Live burns for wildland fire training **are not** allowed.

*For a copy of the current burn ban resolution or for the most up-to-date information go to:  
[www.forestry.ok.gov/burn-ban-information](http://www.forestry.ok.gov/burn-ban-information)*