

# Lake Palo Pinto Fire District Outdoor Burning Guidelines

As of April 2, 2019

**Purpose:** These guidelines are intended to promote community wildfire prevention and minimize false alarms.

**Background:** The Lake Palo Pinto Fire District is comprised of the South Lake Palo Pinto community down to and including 7-R Ranch. It is an unincorporated area of Palo Pinto County with limited water supply access for firefighting and a growing number of residences. Consequently there are an increasing number of 1) homes at potential risk and 2) needs for brush burning to clear land. In this Guideline, "brush" is shorthand for trees, brush, grass, leaves, branch trimmings, or other plant growth.

Brush burning is governed by Texas Code, Outdoor Burning Rule, Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Sections 111.201–221. A county judge and county commissioners' court may issue a Burn Ban on outdoor brush burning that is applicable to unincorporated portions of the county. **Palo Pinto County Burn Ban status is posted** at <http://www.co.palo-pinto.tx.us>, and can also be accessed via a link at the top of <https://LakePaloPintoVFD.org>. Note that even under most Burn Bans, outdoor burning is still allowed when used solely for recreational or ceremonial purposes, in the noncommercial preparation of food, or exclusively as a means of generating warmth in cold weather. In other words, campfires, bonfires, and cooking fires are generally allowed.

**Brush Pile Burn Guidelines:** When brush burning is permitted (Burn Ban is OFF) please use the following safety and community coordination procedures:

- 1) **Maximum brush pile size is 10' in diameter and 6' high.** Absolutely no waste debris such as plastics, plywood, styrofoam, household trash or any other type of garbage is allowed
- 2) **Clear all flammable material within 25' of the outer edge of the pile** (or a distance 2.5 times the diameter of the pile for smaller piles). This includes overhanging branches from nearby trees.
- 3) **Notify the Lake Palo Pinto VFD** as far in advance of your intended burn date as possible. Provide the burn pile location, size, planned burn date, your name and contact info. LPP VFD can be contacted at:
  - a) 940-769-3195. The station is not manned on a full time basis, so you may leave a message, or
  - b) Email us at [LakePaloPintoVFD@gmail.com](mailto:LakePaloPintoVFD@gmail.com) with the details and we will contact you.
- 4) **If notified, Lake Palo Pinto VFD will coordinate with the properly owner** to discuss factors that may affect the safety of the community such as amount of waste to be burned, wind conditions, terrain, season of the year, proximity of the burn pile to structures and other vegetation, National Weather Service or the Texas Department of Forestry fire weather watches, warnings or red flag warnings or any other relevant criteria.
- 5) On the day of the brush pile burn:
  - a) **Property owner will notify the County Sheriff's Office** (940-659-2085) of the burn location and start time. This notification will allow the Sheriff's Office to recognize potential false alarms.
  - b) **Property owner must provide at least one adult during the burning of the brush** with a shovel and dressed appropriately to work the fire. This individual must remain in attendance throughout the entire burn and remain in attendance until the fire is dead out.
  - c) **If requested, 2 representatives from Lake Palo Pinto VFD will be in attendance with a LPP VFD wildland fire truck** during the course of the burn. No fee will be required for this service however a voluntary donation to the LPP VFD would be welcomed.

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**Camp Fire & Cooking Fire Guidelines:** Although generally allowed even during a county Burn Ban, these type of fires are highly discouraged in the Lake Palo Pinto Fire District. Even small open fires can easily accidentally trigger wildland fires. Please consider use of alternatives such as propane stoves, propane fire bowl/tables, chimeneas, masonry fire pits, or other contained fire devices. If you must use a camp fire, cooking fire, or open sided metal fire pit, please follow these basic safety procedures:

- 1) Clear an area 10 feet from the fire edge. Trim grass as low as possible and remove leaves, sticks, and other burnable materials.
- 2) Don't build a fire under low hanging branches. Don't build it on tree roots.
- 3) Don't make the fire too big. A small fire is suitable for marshmallows and cooking.
- 4) Encircle the fire area with a rock fire ring
- 5) Never leave the fire unattended.
- 6) Don't poke the fire needlessly or throw things in the fire. This could cause sparks to fly out.
- 7) Have a means to extinguish a fire (eg, shovel, bucket of sand or water). If sparks fly, act quickly.
- 8) Make sure the fire is dead out before you leave it. This means that you can put your hand where the fire was and not feel any heat. Use a shovel to disperse the ashes and coals and then sprinkle them with water until they are cool.

**Bonfire Guidelines:** Also generally allowed even during a county Burn Ban, bonfires bear a striking resemblance to Brush Pile burns. For a small bonfire (under 2 ft in diameter), please use the Camp Fire and Cooking Fire Guidelines above. For a bonfire larger than 2 ft in diameter, please use the **Brush Pile Burn Guidelines** above.

**7-R Ranch Limitation:** The following summarizes the **7-R Ranch Estates Covenants Conditions, and Restrictions, Section 3.20 No Hazardous Activities:**

"... No open fires shall be lighted or permitted ... except:

- i. **in a contained barbecue unit while attended** and in use for cooking purposes or within a safe and well designed interior wood or gas burning device.
- ii. Campfires or picnic fires **on property designated for such use by the Developer** or by the Association and **authorized in writing** by the Developer or the Association...
- iii. chimneys
- iv. firepits or outdoor fireplaces as **approved in writing by the Architectural Review Committee.**

[Amendment 2]... no fire or burning of any kind shall be allowed .... in contravention of any ban ... on ... burning pursuant to any ... governmental authority having jurisdiction over the Ranch."

7-R Ranch property owners must contact 7-Ranch Management to request waivers from these restrictions. If a waiver is granted by 7-R Ranch Management, then 7-R Management must notify LPP VFD of this waiver. The property owner should then follow the **Brush Pile Burn Guidelines** identified above.

**Summary:** **Our neighbors' lives, homes, and property depend upon all of us using fire responsibly.** Please help us all keep our community safe. Like Smokey the Bear used to say..

**"Only YOU can prevent forest fires!"**