

**POLK COUNTY, TEXAS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: July 15, 2022

Time: 5 p.m.

Contact: Polk County Office of Emergency Management
(936) 327-6826; Fax: (936) 327-6890



POLK COUNTY BURN BAN IN EFFECT

A burn ban is in effect for the unincorporated areas of Polk County. If you reside in a city limit, please contact your city hall for burn ban information. At this time, Polk County’s drought index is very high, and conditions will likely not improve anytime soon. On certain days next week temperatures are expected to be over 100 degrees, and little rainfall is in the forecast.

Unfortunately, volunteer fire departments have been responding to grass/woods fires caused by illegal burning. Law enforcement is issuing citations for illegal burning. Every unnecessary response increases the risk to our responders and their equipment. In our current condition, a rain shower does little to decrease our drought index. Just because it rains doesn’t mean you can now burn. To check the status of the burn ban, call (936) 327-6826 and press zero “0” to listen to the recording.

Only the Polk County Commissioners Court can lift the burn ban. Upon review of information provided by the Texas Forest Service, the Court will determine when circumstances present in the County no longer create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning.

Be aware that according to Section 352.081 of the Local Government Code, a person who knowingly or intentionally violates this order commits a Class C Misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$500.

We encourage citizens to be prepared in the event that there is a wildfire that threatens your home, property, or workplace. Please review the following wildfire preparedness tips.

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS TIPS

- Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands what to do if you need to quickly evacuate.
- Review important documents and make sure your insurance policies and personal documents, like ID, are up to date. Make copies and keep them in a secure password-protected digital space.
- Find an outdoor water source with a hose that can reach any area of your property.
- Create a fire-resistant zone that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.

- You may have to evacuate quickly due to a wildfire. Learn your evacuation routes, practice with your household and pets, and identify where you will go.
- Keep your vehicle fueled up should you need to evacuate.
- Follow the instructions from local authorities. They will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.
- Gather Supplies and keep your go-bag ready. Have enough supplies for your household, including a first aid kit, in your go-bag or car trunk.
- Be cautious when carrying flammable or combustible household products that can cause fires or explosions if handled wrong, such as aerosols, cooking oils, rubbing alcohol and hand sanitizer.
- Keep your cell phone charged when wildfires could be in your area. Purchase backup charging devices to power electronics.

TIPS ON WHAT TO DO DURING A WILDFIRE

- Pay attention to emergency alerts and notifications for information and instructions. Register for AlertMePolkCounty at <https://alertmepolkcounty.bbcportal.com/>. If you need assistance registering for emergency alerts, call Emergency Management at 936-327-6826.
- Evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so!
- Check with local authorities for the latest information about public shelters. If shelters are open, this information will be posted on the Polk County Emergency Management Facebook page and website Polk CountyOEM.com. You can also download the free Red Cross Emergency app for a list of open Red Cross shelters in your area.
- Consider making plans with friends or family to shelter with them where you may be more comfortable.
- If trapped, call 9-1-1 and give your location, but be aware that emergency response could be delayed or impossible. Turn on lights to help rescuers find you.
- Use an N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation or limit your exposure to smoke by going to a safe location where smoke levels are lower.

Please visit [READY.GOV](https://www.ready.gov) for more wildfire safety tips.