COUNTY OF WILLIAMSON §
§
STATE OF TEXAS §

ORDER PROHIBITING OUTDOOR BURNING

WHEREAS, Section 352.081 of the Texas Local Government Code provides that the commissioners court of a county by order may prohibit outdoor burning in the unincorporated area of the county if the commissioners court makes a finding that circumstances present in the unincorporated area create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning; and,

WHEREAS, the Williamson County Commissioners Court does hereby find that circumstances present in all of the unincorporated area of Williamson County create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ORDERED **effective at 5 PM on July 22, 2020** that outdoor burning is prohibited in all of the unincorporated areas of Williamson County and smoking in and/or on Williamson County Parks, Preserves and Trails is prohibited, as follows:

(A) Actions prohibited:

(1) A person violates this order if he/she burns any combustible material outside of an enclosure which serves to contain all flames and/or sparks, or orders such burning by others.

(2) A person violates this order if he/she engages in any activity outdoors which could allow flames or sparks that could result in a fire unless done in an enclosure designed to protect the spread of fire, or orders such activities by others.

(3) A person violates this order if he/she smokes any tobacco or non-tobacco substances, by any method, in and/or on Williamson County Parks, Preserves and Trails, which include the unincorporated areas of the Southwest Regional Park, Berry Springs Park and Preserve, Eastern Williamson County Regional Park, Twin Lakes Park, Champion Park, Brushy Creek Regional Trail and Lake Creek Trail.

(B) Enforcement:

(1) Upon notification of a suspected violation of this order, the fire department with jurisdiction for the location of the fire shall respond to the scene and take immediate measures to contain and/or extinguish the fire.

(2) As soon as possible, a duly commissioned peace officer shall be sent to the scene to investigate the nature of the fire.

(3) If, in the opinion of the officer on the scene, the goal of this order can be attained by informing the responsible party about the prohibitions established by this order, the officer may, at his or her discretion, request compliance with it. In such instances, an entry of this notification

containing the date, time and place of the warning, along with the name of the party receiving the warning, shall be forwarded to the office of County Judge.

(4) In accordance with 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.

(C) This order does not apply to outdoor burning activities:

(1) related to public health and safety that are authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for:

(a) firefighter training;

(b) public utility, natural gas pipeline, or mining operations; or

(c) planting or harvesting of agriculture crops.

(2) that are conducted by a prescribed burn manager certified under Section 153.048, Natural Resources Code, and meet the standards of Section 153.047, Natural Resources Code.

(3) that involve the performance of outdoor combustible operations, including but not limited to, outdoor welding, cutting or grinding operations and outdoor hot works operations, by any person if the operations are performed in compliance with the following requirements creating a controlled environment and safeguards on each day when operations are performed:

(a) Areas where welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations are being performed are free of vegetation for at least twenty-five feet in all directions;

(b) Surfaces around welding or hot works area are wetted down;

(c) Each location where welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations are being performed must have cellular telephone communications for emergency response;

(d) Before beginning any operations, the person performing the welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations must notify the local fire department or Emergency Services District which serves the location where the welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations are planned;

(e) A dedicated fire watch person attends each welder, cutter, grinder, or worker performing hot works operations or any activity that causes a spark;

(f) At least one (1) water pressure fire extinguisher per fire watch person is located within 10 feet of the location where welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations are being performed;

(g) No welding, cutting or grinding operations or hot works operations is allowed on days designated as red flag warning days by the National Weather Service;

(h) If all welding, cutting and grinding operations or hot works operations are performed only in a total welding or hot works enclosure, or "welding box" or "hot works box", that is sufficiently high to control sparks, including a fire retardant cover over the top, the operations must comply with requirements (e), (f), and (g) in this list and is encouraged to comply with requirements (a)-(d) inclusive, if feasible and appropriate, and;

(i) If all welding, cutting and grinding operations or hot works operations are performed only in sub-surface, or "bell hole", welding and grinding operations or hot works operations within approved excavations, the operations must comply with requirements (e), (f), and (g) in this list and is encouraged to comply with requirements (a)-(d) inclusive, if feasible and appropriate.

Be it also ORDERED that the purpose of this order is the mitigation of the public safety hazard posed by wild fires during the current dry weather by curtailing the practice of outdoor burning, which purpose is to be taken into account in any enforcement action based upon this order.

This order shall expire at **5 PM on the 21st day of August, 2020**, or prior to such expiration date if the Williamson County Commissioners Court or the County Judge, if designated by the Commissioners Court, determines that the circumstances present in the unincorporated areas of Williamson County no longer create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning, whichever occurs earlier. The Williamson County Commissioners Court may adopt an additional order that takes effect on the expiration of this order if the Williamson County Commissioners Court finds at such time that circumstances then present in all of the unincorporated area of Williamson County continue to create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning.

ORDERED THIS 21st DAY OF JULY 2020.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

By: _____
Bill Gravell, Jr., County Judge