



HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

M. S. Montgomery
Fire Marshal

March 18, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Harris County Burn Ban Continues despite Recent Rains



This cautionary statement is based on information provided by the Texas Forest Service, Governor's Division of Emergency Management, and the National Weather Service



paradox (n). A counterintuitive conclusion or outcome. (*source: Wiktionary*)

Despite recent rains, **there is a burn ban in effect for unincorporated Harris County. No outdoor burning is allowed** except in an enclosure which contains all flames and/or sparks outdoor burning activities authorized by TCEQ, non-commercial cooking, and prescribed welding, grinding, cutting, or "hot work" operations.

Recent rains helped saturate the soil, but did little to affect dry fuels from winter's freeze. And therein lies the paradox. The ground may be saturated in some areas of the county, but semi-dry or dry in others. Living fuels have higher moisture content and will not burn as readily, but freeze-dried fuels did not absorb moisture and remain ready to burn. So, **a precautionary burn ban remains in effect.**

Under these burn ban conditions, outdoor burning **is allowed** in an enclosure that doesn't allow the escape of flames, embers, or sparks. Backyard cook-outs and barbeques are also allowed. So are outdoor burns permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ("TCEQ").

A little common sense goes a long way. It is illegal to burn at night, or to burn in the open where flames, embers, or sparks can escape. You should never burn on dry or windy days.

And remember, a violation of the burn ban is a Class "C" misdemeanor, punishable by up to \$500 fine. In addition, if you start a fire that causes damage to property without the consent of the owner may be charged with Reckless Damage or Destruction, a Class C misdemeanor, or Arson, a felony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Montgomery".

Mike Montgomery
Director/Fire Marshal