

MCFMO Media Release



Burn Ban Approved for Montgomery County

July 5th, 2022

Drought conditions expected to persist and intensify over the next few weeks of summer.

Montgomery County and most of southeast Texas did not see much of the tropical rainfall that had been forecast for us leading up to the holiday weekend. As a result, our overall drought levels continue to creep up each day. Fortunately, high humidity and calm winds limited our wildfire risk this weekend, as County Firefighters responded to approximately 3 dozen grass and woods fires, most of which were caused by consumer fireworks. The favorable conditions allowed for all of the public fireworks displays in Montgomery County to go forward without a hitch.

As our Keetch Byram Drought Index has now crossed 650, (a level historically associated with increased fire activity), Montgomery County Commissioner's Court approved a "County Burn Ban" as defined in [Texas Local Government Code 352.081](#). While most trash burning is prohibited year round in Montgomery County, the adoption of a County Burn Ban extends that prohibition to the burning of limbs and leaves gathered on residential property. Under State Law, the burn ban cannot be extended to cover the discharge of consumer fireworks and it does not prohibit outdoor grilling or cooking.

With that said, while fireworks can still be legally discharged, fire officials are asking residents to wait until conditions improve before discharging any fireworks left over from the 4th of July. While most all of the fireworks related fires this weekend were relatively small and quickly extinguished, they could pose a risk of wildfire under the right conditions as our drought conditions intensify.

The Montgomery County Fire Marshal's Office presented these findings to Commissioner's Court this morning and the court decided that a 30 day burn ban would be the most prudent course of action. The court can revisit the issue and extend the ban if conditions do not improve by that time. .

During a typical wildfire season, the vast majority of fires are the result of human activity, with outdoor burning as one of the leading causes. Violation of the burn ban is a Class C Misdemeanor with fines up to \$500.

Montgomery County residents are reminded that the burning of household rubbish is prohibited year round in subdivisions and small tracts of land less than 5 acres in size. Violators can also be cited for a Class C Misdemeanor for burning trash at any time, regardless of whether or not a burn ban is in effect. .

All commercial burning is prohibited year round and land clearing debris may not be burned on the surface of the ground as that is a violation of state air quality regulations.

