

Judge Arnold issued an order on November 28, 2011 rescinding the Burn Ban Order currently in effect. Conditions have improved enough to allow burning. Please exercise extreme caution when implementing a controlled burn and always stay up to date with the weather forecasts. The following message has been issued by Wess Abbott, EMC:

The Dickens County Office of Emergency Management would like to provide some helpful information before you conduct any control burns. We are aware of your need to conduct control burns on your property and would like to say thank you for your patience and understanding for not burning during the burn bans. Even with the recent moisture that we have received, the current drought and heavy fuel loads still provide for extreme fire conditions. According to the Texas Forest Service, "approximately 90% of wildfires in Texas are caused by people. Escaped debris burning is the number one cause of wildfires in Texas. Inadequate fire breaks and failure to stay with outdoor fires are the two most common reasons for escaped control burns."

Before the burn takes place, please consider these steps.

- 1.** Notify the Dickens County Sheriff's Office at 806-623-5227 prior to the burn so that the dispatcher can announce the control burn on the radio giving a time and location to local officials.
- 2.** Make sure weather conditions are favorable and no weather changes are expected such as a change in wind direction or a strong cold front. This time of the year weather conditions change more rapidly with little advanced notice.
- 3.** Establish wide control lines around the burn site removing all vegetation. Remember that radiant heat can catch exposures on fire from great distances and embers are hard to see during daylight hours. A good rule of thumb is to provide ten feet of spacing per one foot of expected flame height.
- 4.** Never leave the burn unattended. Always provide for an escape route and a way to call 911.
- 5.** Always keep water and hand tools nearby.
- 6.** Please avoid burning during times when Volunteer Fire Department staffing may be low, such as during the holidays.

Remember that negligently allowing your fire to escape onto your neighbors property can be a Class C misdemeanor offense that is punishable by a fine up to \$500.00 and you can be held financial responsible for any damages. This is the same as during a burn ban. Please be mindful of our farmers and ranchers who have already been significantly affected by the drought alone.