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EL PASO COUNTY E.S.D. #2 -- FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Bonfire Policy

This safety policy has been established to assist persons who are planning to erect a bonfire within El Paso County ESD #2 local jurisdiction. These guidelines are not conclusive but offer guidance believed to be appropriate safety considerations while planning, constructing and maintaining a bonfire. Bonfires may not be constructed within county jurisdiction without prior permission from the El Paso County ESD #2 Fire Marshal, or its designee, and other local agencies (if required). The following is a checklist of safety requirements and guidelines, which have been developed to insure that bonfires are constructed and maintained safely.

Bonfire Safety Checklist

A. Notifying the Appropriate Authorities

1. During the preplanning phase, the Requestor must contact the El Paso County ESD #2 Fire Marshal, or designee, **15 days prior to the event**. A plot plan or diagram showing the area where the burning will take place, the location and distances of spectators, buildings and any stored combustibles.
2. The Fire Marshal will direct the Requestor to other local agencies in obtaining written approvals from the appropriate state/and or local authorities, if required. Such authorities may include Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (T.C.E.Q.), Clint P.D., San Elizario Marshals, Socorro P.D., Anthony P.D. and/or Sherriff's Department.
3. The bonfire request must be received by El Paso County ESD #2 Fire Marshal's Office **no less than 15 days prior** to the date of the event.
4. El Paso County ESD #2 Fire Marshal will determine if appropriate safety personnel and equipment will be available to accommodate the event. The Fire Marshal will inspect the proposed bonfire site and will review safety requirements with the Requestor prior to the event.
5. The bonfire permit will be supplies and signed by El Paso County ESD #2 Fire Marshal at the completion of this checklist and completion of a burn site inspection.

B. Prevailing Winds

1. Prevailing winds may not exceed twenty miles per hour (20 mph) for at least 30 minutes before the fire is set, or the event must be postponed until such time as the wind velocity has receded to 20 mph or less.
2. To verify prevailing wind speeds and direction visit the website for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration @www.noaa.org

C. Fueling the Fire

1. The use of gasoline, kerosene, plastics, paper products, including but not limited to, cardboard, newspaper, shredded wood packing and popcorn packing insulation is **PROHIBITED**.

2. Nail-free wooden boards and logs may be used to fuel the bonfire. In instances where materials contain nails, it will be responsibility of the Requestor to thoroughly clear the burn site of nails or other sharp items after use. Such materials may be presoaked using CHARCOAL LIGHTER FLUID. Charcoal lighter fluid is the only recognized accelerant approved by El Paso County ESD #2. Presoaked fireplace logs may be purchased from the most major food and /or convenience stores may also be used to fuel the fire.
3. All spare or unused fuel including, but not limited to, charcoal lighter fluid, wood, paper, etc., may be stored **no closer than fifty feet (50 ft.)** from the Bonfire. The charcoal lighter fluid must be stored in its original container and with its lid maintained in the closed position after each use.

D. Lighting the Fire

1. The bonfire fire-load shall be secured by personnel during the construction phase and up to the actual lighting of the bonfire. This will minimize any attempted tampering of the bonfire.
2. Presoak the tip of a 60-inch torch/stick with charcoal lighter fluid to ignite the fire.
3. The fire shall be ignited with the wind at ones back. Caution should be exercised if additional liquid starter fluid is added to the fire following its initial lighting.

E. Security and Fire Ground Monitors

1. The Requestor will be responsible for providing a minimum of four (4) Fire Brand/Ember Monitors. Fire Brand/Ember Monitors will assist trained personnel with visually monitoring floating firebrands (airborne lighted particles) as well as keeping onlookers/participants at a safe distance from the Bonfire. Should a fire erupt caused by a flying firebrand/ember the monitor must not attempt to extinguish the fire but should immediately call 911 and report the fire location.
2. The Bonfire shall be maintained at a size **not to exceed 25 sq ft. (5 ft. by 5 ft.)**.
3. The Requestor shall meet the requirements set forth within the International Fire Code (Section 307).
4. To insure personal safety, unauthorized persons shall not engage in the activity of fire suppression but shall notify 911 immediately.

F. Extinguishments and Cleanup

1. A minimum of one (1) 4A fire extinguishers and two (2) five-gallon size containers of water – OR – (2) 2 ½ gallon pressurized water type extinguishers should be available and manned to control the fire during the event. All fire extinguisher used for the Bonfire shall have a current code-compliant tag, as required by the State of Texas – OR – A current proof of purchase (receipt) will be acceptable in lieu of the State required tag.
2. If available, a charged garden hose line with enough length to reach the fire, shall be readily accessible before the bon fire is started and shall remain exclusively available for fire control throughout the vent or until the fire has been fully extinguished.
3. After the fire has been extinguished, hand tools including metal shovels and rakes should be used to turn the charred materials while applying copious amounts of water to ensure that the fire has been fully extinguished. Securing hand tools and restoring the burn site to its original condition shall be responsibility of the Requestor.
4. Charred materials shall be deposited in a 55 gallon open top metal drum and fully immersed in water and remain in the drum on location until properly disposed.
5. Charred materials **shall not** be deposited into plastic refuge receptacle (dumpsters)

Important Telephone Numbers and Websites

Fire Marshal's Office	915-851-0304		
Clint Fire Department	915-851-0018	Clint Police Department	915-851-1600
Fabens Fire Department	915-765-5038	Sheriff's Department	915-546-2280
Montana Vista Fire Department	915-857-1080	Sheriff's Department	915-546-2280
San Elizario Fire Department	915-851-2020	San Elizario Marshal's Department	915-974-1108
Socorro Fire Department	915-851-8855	Socorro Police Department	915-858-608
West Valley Fire Department	915-886-2323	Anthony Police Department	915-886-3839
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	915-834-4949		
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	www.noaa.org		