

# COUNTY BURN BAN CRITERIA

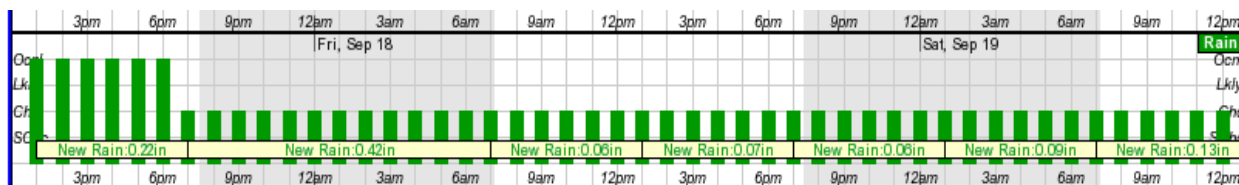
Per state legislation as of 2009, there are **four criteria which must ALL be met before** a county burn ban can even be considered by county commissioners:

- 1) The **drought category** within the county has to be “moderate” (D1), “severe” (D2), “extreme (D3)”, or “exceptional (D4)” as determined by the latest weekly drought map from the “U.S. Drought Monitor”. There is a link to that map (“Oklahoma Drought Map”) in the “County Burn Bans” section of the FIRE section of OK-FIRE (<http://okfire.mesonet.org>) :

📄 County Burn Bans
Current Burn Bans
Oklahoma Drought Map
3-Day Precipitation Forecast
U.S. Drought Monitor
Burn Ban Guidelines

- 2) **Less than one-half inch of precipitation** is forecast by the National Weather Service (NWS) in the county for the next three days. There is a link to the forecast 3-day precipitation map in the “County Burn Bans” section of the FIRE section (see above). For greater local resolution, the forecast NWS precipitation amounts can be found in the bottom chart of their “Hourly Weather Graph”; one can also reach that chart directly (for the listed Mesonet site location, which is the same one selected on the OK-FIRE home page) by using the “NWS Forecast Chart” link in the National Weather Service section of WEATHER/ FORECAST Fire Weather:

📄 National Weather Service
NWS Forecast Chart (Beaver)
NWS Forecast Table (Beaver)
Amarillo Forecast Office
Amarillo WFO Wx Planner
Norman Forecast Office
Norman WFO Wx Planner



- 3) Fire occurrence is **significantly greater than normal for the season** and/or initial attack on a significant number of wildland fires has been unsuccessful due to extreme fire behavior. Remember that wildfires occur regularly during Oklahoma's fire season (November through April) - the criterion is "**significantly** greater than normal for the season".
- 4) **More than 20% of the wildfires** in the county have been caused by escaped debris burning or controlled burning activities.

### **Other Guidelines and Provisions in the Law**

In addition to the above four criteria having to be met, commissioners must also document that a majority of the county's municipal and certified rural fire departments agree that a period of extreme fire danger exists prior to passage of the resolution. This may require the county to develop a contact list of fire chiefs to facilitate gathering this information in a timely manner, or provide some other method to gather the necessary input to support your decision.

A majority of commissioners may call a meeting at any time to consider a burn ban resolution. A resolution takes effect immediately upon its passage.

A resolution shall be effective for no more than thirty (30) days and expires at the end of thirty days from the date of its passage. The Board may cancel a ban before it expires, by following the same steps described above and passing a resolution to that effect. If extreme conditions persist, the Board may pass additional resolutions every thirty days, following the same procedures.

The complete documentation on the burn ban legislation can be found on the Oklahoma Forestry Services web site by clicking on the "Burn Ban Guidelines" link in the "County Burn Bans" section of the FIRE section in OK-FIRE.

Finally, a map of current Oklahoma counties under burn bans can be found by clicking on "Current Burn Bans" in the same section.

***Note that even if all four criteria are met, counties still have the option of NOT instituting a burn ban (it's totally voluntary, not mandatory).***

**OK-FIRE can be used as a tool to help decide WHEN NOT to issue a burn ban (in cases where all four criteria are met) and also for WHEN TO CANCEL an existing burn ban. However, OK-FIRE cannot be used alone to issue a burn ban (the four criteria still need to first be met).**