

Burning Permits and Restrictions

How are burns classified for permitting?

Burn permits are issued under two classifications: agricultural and open. Agricultural burn permits are issued to landowners who are typically burning pastures, ranging in size from a few to thousands of acres. Open burn permits are typically issued for smaller burns, such as a small volume brush pile.

How many burn permits were issued in 2021?

In 2021, a total of 2,791 burn permits were issued by Sedgwick County Fire District 1. This resulted in 3,071 burns conducted. 11 percent were for agricultural burns (1,051.35 acres) and 89 percent were issued for open burns. 34 permits were revoked in 2021.

What is the current state law regarding burning?

State law currently allows burning in both agricultural and open settings throughout the year except in April. Specific burn restrictions have been adopted for various Kansas counties. Permit requirements vary based on the location and type of burn. Some burns require a state permit.

What are the public health issues associated with burning?

Pollutants from a variety of sources affect the air quality in Kansas. The particulate matter and gases produced by burning vegetative matter can include soot, ash, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and oxides of sulfur and nitrogen.

Carbon monoxide reduces the blood's ability to supply oxygen, which places infants, seniors, and those with heart, lung or anemic diseases at greater risk. Ozone created from the reaction of nitrogen with other particles in the presence of heat aggravates allergies, asthma and emphysema, as well as impairs overall lung function. In Kansas, ozone is one of the key pollutants of concern associated with burning.

What does the burn restriction mean for residents of Sedgwick County?

In 2011, the Kansas Legislature approved a regulation regarding burning in Sedgwick and other Kansas counties. During the month of April, brush pile burns, firefighter training, lagoon burns and other similar small open burns will not be allowed. Agricultural, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and trash barrel burns will still be allowed during this time. Other burns, such as tornado-produced materials, will be allowed on a case-by-case basis by exceptions granted from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

For More Information:

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Office of the Fire Marshal

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