

Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District
Air Quality Guidelines and Requirements for Agricultural Burns,
Noxious Weed Burns, Irrigation Canals Burns, and Hazard Reduction Burns

All agricultural burns, noxious weed burns, canal/ditch bank burns, and hazard reduction burns within the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District (EKAPCD) that possess a valid permit from the fire agency with jurisdiction over that property may burn on days designated as burn days by both their fire department and the California Air Resources Board (ARB). A burn permit is valid only on days designated by the ARB as burn days and with the approval of the fire department with jurisdiction over that property. A limited amount of burning under permit may be conducted within a region on a marginal burn day, but only with the approval of both the fire department and the EKAPCD. Prescribed burns and larger rangeland improvement burns have very specific requirements and notification procedures depending on size that are listed in EKAPCD Rule 417.

1. An agricultural burn permit is for agricultural crop waste burns, and for agricultural canal/ditch weed removal burns. Agricultural burns may be allowed to burn on marginal or no-burn days if the burner demonstrates to the EKAPCD's and fire department's satisfaction that the agricultural operation faces imminent and substantial economic loss if not allowed to burn.
2. Rangeland improvement burns are burns generally used to improve pasture or grazing land, but are also conducted to improve habitat for wildlife. If brush and trees are cut they require six month drying time before burning. Multi-acre rangeland improvement burns with heavy brush and tree loadings or those burns with light loadings that are larger than 10 acres must be treated as a prescribed burn. Rangeland improvement burns conducted for wildlife improvement must have been approved by the California Department of Fish and Game.
3. A Noxious Weed Burn Permit issued for tumbleweed or star thistle should only be valid for those specific weeds. Tumbleweeds must be piled in piles no more than 15 feet per side and dry before igniting. No more than one pile per parcel burned at any one time and no more than 10 acres of material burned per parcel per day. Tumbleweeds and star thistle must be burned on site, to reduce distribution of their seeds.
4. A Hazard Reduction Burning permit shall only be issued for vegetation that has been cut to create a defensible space or to abate a fire hazard to an existing residence or a residence under construction. The permit should be valid only for the burn season designated by the fire department with jurisdiction over the property. Burning of vegetation to allow for construction of a commercial facility, or for a change in use of the property is not considered hazard reduction burning. If there is a threat of an imminent hazard that requires immediate action to abate, the fire department may authorize hazardous reduction burning on a marginal or no burn day and should notify the EKAPCD of their decision as soon as possible. If it is a holiday or a weekend the fire department shall notify the EKAPCD of the decision on the next working day.
5. The ignition period of an authorized burn shall be from 8 am until 3 pm Burns should be attended at all times.
6. Fire department personnel may "spot check" some of the burns authorized by permit at the discretion of the fire protection agency.
7. Only nonsmoking ignition devices should be used. Tires, oil, and other materials with a high smoke or toxic potential shall not be used.
8. Chipping or other alternative methods of disposal are encouraged, but if a material must be burned it should be dried in accordance with EKAPCD Rule 417 requirements:
 - A. All vegetative material shall be sufficiently dry to in order to combust without excessive smoke;
 - B. Brush, prunings and small branches should be dried for 3 weeks;
 - C. Large branches and tree trunks should be allowed to dry for 6 weeks;
 - D. No tires, toxics, residential/commercial waste, animal carcasses or scrap lumber shall be burned.