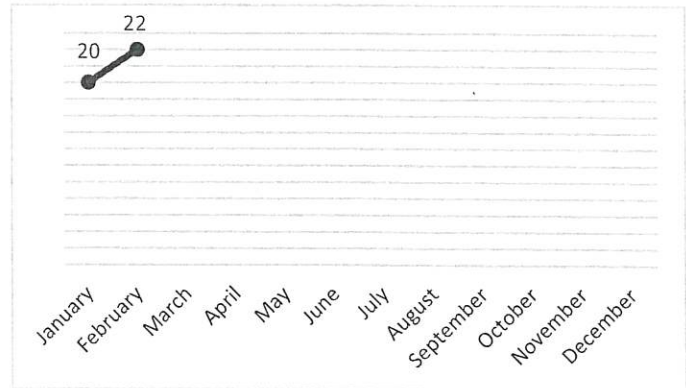




To: Honorable Mayor and Houston City Council
 From: Christian Hartley, Fire Chief *CA*
 Thru: Mayor Virgie Thompson *Vt*
 Subj: Fire Chief's Report – March 2022



Fire – Local	3	Fire – Aid	3
Rescue	5	Comm Service	
EMS	10	Haz Mat	1
TOTAL CALLS -		22	
CALLS TO DATE – 2022			42

March brings us warm weather and warnings of the upcoming wildland fire season. While the significant snowfall we have had recently brings some relief for us, it will be temporary – it will melt off and green up will still take until mid-June to occur. The most important thing we can say is to avoid any outdoor debris burning as much as possible. The Fire Department will be providing one wood chipping day per month for April, May, June, July, August, and September. We will also provide education as much as possible through multiple means to encourage people to find alternatives to outdoor burning. Outdoor debris burning is the cause of over 70 percent of human-caused wildfires in Alaska. Burn barrels annually cause at least one fire of at least a half-acre and small burn piles that are 3 ft x 3 ft routinely cause much larger fires. Outdoor debris burning is legal in Houston and burn permits will be required as of April 1. Being legal does not make it wise: please find alternatives to burning where possible and never leave a fire unattended. Be ready to call 9-1-1 if it starts to spread.

In Alaska in 2021, 33 fires caused by debris burning and campfires burned 5,793 acres. Every other fire with a determined human cause added up to 204 fires burning 741 acres. That's 14% of fires causing 89% of lost acreage because of open debris burning and campfires. Stop it. Just stop it. Oh and fireworks? There were 5 fires statewide



Engine 91 and Truck 73 at Houston High School for a burned heater motor

that burned a grand total of 2 acres, all were caused by misuse of the firework. Firearms and explosives? 36 fires burning 556 acres. That's why I strongly encouraged the addition of regulation of exploding binary targets last year, and this council's support caught the positive attention of Forestry. [source of data: Alaska Division of Forestry, Alaska Fire Number 2021]

BURN BARREL REQUIREMENTS

55 Gallon Barrel

- Circular, outdoor metal drum, in good condition, with no more than a 55 gallon capacity
- Metal mesh cover on top in good condition, with mesh openings no larger than 5/8"
- At least three evenly spaced 3" square holes covered with metal mesh along the bottom
- Situated on top of non-burnable materials



- At least 6 feet of ground cleared to mineral soil extending to all sides of the barrel
- Stay with the barrel until completely out and cold to the touch

 Sufficient water to immediately extinguish fire and a tool close by when burning



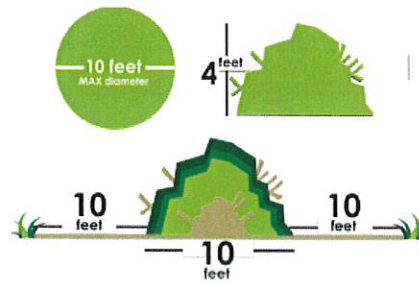
- Burn only untreated wood, leaves, grass clippings, cardboard and paper

 **1** Adult with the barrel at all times


SMALL PILE BURNING REQUIREMENTS

Pile Specifications

- Only ONE pile burning at a time
- Max ten foot diameter and four foot height



- At least 10 feet of ground cleared to mineral soil extending to all sides of the pile
- Stay with the pile until completely out and cold to the touch

 Sufficient water to immediately extinguish fire and tools close by when burning

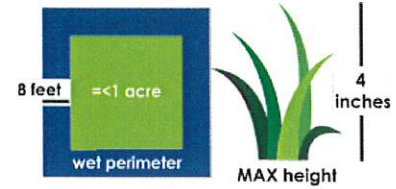


 At least one adult with the pile at all times

LAWN BURNING REQUIREMENTS

Lawn Specifications

- Maintained lawn
- Max one acre and four inches in height



- Maintain an 8 foot wet perimeter on the ground around the burn at all times
- Stay with the lawn until completely out and cold to the touch



Sufficient water to immediately extinguish fire and tools close by when burning



 **3** Adults at all times

Do not burn within 30' of structures and power lines

I want to take this opportunity to thank the City Clerk, Sonya Pevan, for her service to this city. She has been Clerk for the entire time I have been Fire Chief, and although my tenure with the city has been a little longer than her's they have been interconnected the entire time. She has helped our department get our records management better controlled, as she has with every department in the city. In fact, and don't let her tell you otherwise, she is a role model statewide for records management and often consulted by people who write laws and ordinances related to records management. Her advice has been implemented statewide. Her office management has been diligently professional.

Without her guidance and support through the past decade, this fire department would not be in the position it is today. She is a strong enforcer of civil rights for every single one of our residents, and I like to remind her that I helped train her when she first started as Deputy Clerk for the city (I had been an acting deputy clerk during the transition period). She took my limited knowledge, expanded it, improved upon it, and helped city administration make this city what it is today. Sonya Pevan has been a tremendous asset to the city and her absence will be noted, but her presence at the Borough will be felt.

Sonya, we will miss you.