

## Chapter 800

### RECREATIONAL FIRE ORDINANCE

#### Section 800.010. Definitions.

As used in this section, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them:

- a. "Recreational Fire", a fire used for cooking, warmth, or recreational enjoyment in an outdoor fire pit or fireplace, which is not used for disposal of waste or refuse.
- b. "Fire Pit/Fireplace", a device used for containing an outdoor fire, including fire pits, fire bowls, chimineas, and other similar structures.

#### Section 800.020. Recreational Fire Requirements

- a. The fire pit or outdoor fireplace shall not exceed 36 inches in width.
- b. The fire pit or fireplace shall be specifically designed for outdoor use and built to contain flames and embers safely. The fire pit or fireplace shall have a proper fireproof base (such as stone, metal, or fire-resistant materials) to prevent the fire from spreading to the surrounding area.
- c. The fire pit or fireplace shall be made from non-combustible materials like steel, cast iron, brick, or stone. The structure shall naturally control flame spread, and include a protective barrier (such as a screen or lid) to contain flying embers.

#### Section 800.030. Location and Safety Zones

- a. Clearance from Combustible Materials. The fire pit or fireplace shall be placed at least 15 feet away from any combustible materials, including but not limited to: wooden decks, fences, sheds, trees, bushes, or shrubs with dry leaves or pine needles, furniture made of wood, or other flammable materials.
- b. Surface Stability. The fire pit shall be placed on a flat, stable surface to prevent tipping. The fire pit shall not be placed directly on grass. Stone, brick, or other stable materials shall be used to create a foundation.

#### Section 800.040. Fuel and Materials for Burning

- a. Allowed Fuels. Only dry, seasoned wood shall be burned. This includes small branches and twigs from trees that have been pruned or trimmed, as long as they fit comfortably within the fire pit.
- b. Prohibited Fuels. The following materials shall not be burned: trash, including plastic, paper, and chemicals, yard waste such as leaves or large branches that cannot fit within the fire pit, pressure-treated wood, painted wood, or wood with chemical finishes.

### **Section 800.050. Supervision and Fire Safety**

- a. Supervision. Constant supervision of the fire is required by an adult. The fire shall never be left unattended at any time while burning.
- b. Fire Extinguishing Equipment. An extinguishing agent shall be kept nearby. Acceptable extinguishing agents are: an operable garden hose with water, a bucket of sand, a fire extinguisher rated for outdoor use (Class ABC), a shovel and dirt to smother the fire.
- c. Duration of Use. The fire shall be completely extinguished before leaving it unattended by an adult. All embers shall be fully extinguished, and the area shall no longer be hot.

### **Section 800.060. Fire Size and Control**

- a. Fire Size. The fire shall remain small and manageable. Excessive flames and heat shall not occur. Only appropriate-sized logs for the fire pit shall be used, and the amount of wood added to the fire shall be regulated.
- b. Wind Conditions. A fire shall not be ignited when wind gusts exceed 15 mph.
- c. Flame Height. The flame height shall not exceed the height of the walls or screen of the fire pit. Loose materials (e.g., leaves, twigs) shall be kept away from the flames at all times.

### **Section 800.070. Extinguishing the Fire**

- a. Dousing the Fire. When extinguishing the fire, the fire shall be completely extinguished. If using water to extinguish the flames, water shall be poured evenly and slowly over the fire to saturate the entire pile of embers. If using sand to extinguish the flames, embers shall be buried with the same and then stirred to ensure full coverage.
- b. Checking for Heat. The area surrounding the fire pit shall be checked for residual heat. Feel the ground around the fire to ensure it has fully cooled before leaving the site.

### **Section 800.080. Violations and Penalties**

- a. Any violation of this Section will be subject to penalties as outlined in the City of Houston Lake Municipal Code. Violations may include fines, cessation of the fire, or other actions as determined by the City of Houston Lake.”