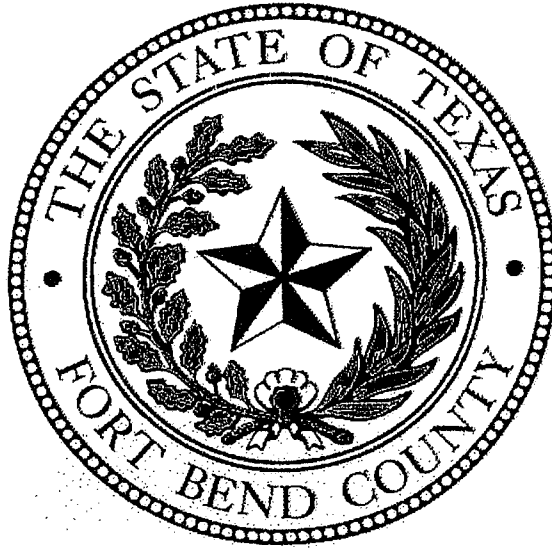


ANNEX U



LEGAL

Fort Bend County

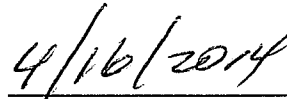
APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Annex U

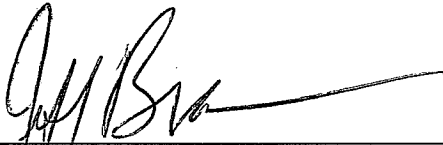
Legal



Roy L. Cordes
County Attorney
Fort Bend County



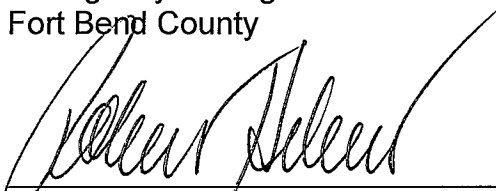
Date



Jeff Braun
Emergency Management Coordinator
Fort Bend County



Date



Robert Hebert
County Judge
Fort Bend County



Date

RECORD OF CHANGES

Annex U

Legal

Change #	Date of Change	Entered By	Date Entered
1	8-23-10	Paul Stewart	8-23-10
2	8-24-10	A.L. Spears	8-24-10
3	Update 02-13-14	Alan Spears	02-13-14
4	4-14-14	Paul Stewart	04-14-14

ANNEX U

LEGAL

I. AUTHORITY

- A.** See Section I of the Basic Plan for general authorities.
- B.** Texas Government Code, Chapter 791 (Interlocal Cooperation Contracts).
- C.** Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 203 (Management and Preservation of Records).
- D.** Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 240 (Miscellaneous Regulatory Powers of Counties).

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is make provision for legal services during emergency situations or when such situations appear imminent and to provide guidance for invoking the emergency powers of government when necessary.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
TAC	Texas Administrative Code
TGC	Texas Government Code

IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

We are at risk from a number of hazards that could threaten public health and safety and personal and government property; see Section IV.A of the basic plan for a summary of these hazards. Legal issues requiring timely resolution may arise during pre-disaster hazard mitigation designed to lessen the effects of known hazards, during pre-disaster preparedness activities designed to enhance the local capability to respond to a disaster, during the actual response to a disaster, or during the post-disaster recovery process.

B. Assumptions

1. Local emergency preparedness plans and programs should have a sound legal basis.
2. In responding to major emergencies and disasters, local officials may be required to take extraordinary measures to protect public health and safety and preserve property and they will require timely advice regarding the legality of proposed measures.
3. Implementation of measures to protect public health and safety and preserve property during an emergency and as recovery and mitigation activities are undertaken after a disaster generally require issuance of appropriate legal documents, which should be prepared by competent legal service professionals.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Emergency Declaration.
 - a. Pursuant to Chapter 433, TGC, the chief elected official or the governing body of a city or county may request the Governor declare a state of emergency for a jurisdiction or a portion thereof. For purposes of this statute, an emergency exists in the following situations: a riot or unlawful assembly by three or more persons acting together by use of force or violence, the existence of a clear and present danger of violence, or a natural or man-made disaster. The Governor may proclaim a state of emergency and issue directives to control effectively and terminate the emergency and protect life and property. Directives issued by the Governor for a state of emergency expire 72 hours after issuance; however, successive states of emergency may be declared by the Governor. A sample request for an emergency declaration is provided in Appendix 1.
 - b. The emergency declaration process is generally not used for natural or man-made disasters because: (1) it requires action by the Governor to resolve local problems rather than facilitating action by local officials, (2) the Governor's directives require advance notice before they become effective, and (3) directives are of very limited duration – 72 hours. Hence, a disaster declaration may be more appropriate for responding to natural or technological emergencies. An emergency declaration may be appropriate for security-related incidents where local law enforcement resources are inadequate to handle the situation.
 - c. If the actions taken by the Governor after an initial emergency declaration do not resolve the emergency situation, the chief elected official or governing body may request that the emergency declaration be continued. And if the local emergency situation that was the basis for an emergency declaration is resolved before the Governor's directives expire, it is desirable to advise the Governor that the emergency declaration is no longer required.

2. Disaster Declaration

- a. The Texas Disaster Act, Chapter 418, TGC, provides that the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision (the county judge of a county or the mayor of a municipality) may declare a local state of disaster. A disaster declaration may be issued when a disaster has occurred or appears imminent. The disaster declaration process is typically used by the chief elected officials to respond to or recover from a significant natural or man-made disaster. A sample disaster declaration is provided in Appendix 2. Copies of a disaster declaration should be filed with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Fort Bend County Clerk and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City/City's Secretary.
- b. The Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management provides that county judges and mayors may, when a state of disaster has been declared, exercise similar powers on an appropriate local scale as have been granted to the Governor in the Disaster Act. Among those powers is the authority to suspend procedural laws and rules, use public and private resources to respond to the disaster, control the movement of people, restrict the sale and transportation of certain items, and take a number of other actions. Once a state of disaster is declared, a city or county may enact an emergency ordinance or order describing the specific emergency regulations that are to be put into effect during the disaster. A sample emergency powers ordinance is provided in Appendix 5.
- c. A disaster declaration may not be continued in force for more than seven days unless renewed by the Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Councils. A sample ordinance/court order extending a disaster declaration is provided in Appendix 3. The Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Councils may terminate a state of disaster at any time; this approach is typically used when the threat that gave rise to the disaster declaration has subsided. Alternatively, the Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court and/or Joint resolution Jurisdiction City Councils may chose to simply let the declaration expire by taking no action to extend it. A sample ordinance/court order terminating a disaster declaration is provided in Appendix 4.

3. County Regulation of Outdoor Burning & Use of Fireworks

One of the effects of drought conditions is an increased threat of wildfires. Many municipalities have enacted ordinances that prohibit or restrict open fires within their corporate limits at all times. The Local Government Code gives counties authority to mitigate the risk of wildfire by restricting outdoor burning and the use of fireworks in unincorporated areas under certain circumstances.

- a. Pursuant to §352.081 of the Local Government Code, counties may restrict outdoor burning if drought conditions have been determined by the Texas Forest Service to exist and county officials find that circumstances present in all or part of the unincorporated area create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning. The normal procedure for implementing restrictions on outdoor burning is for commissioners court to issue an emergency order restricting outdoor burning in all unincorporated areas of the county or portions of those areas. A

sample commissioners court order banning outdoor burning is provided in Appendix 6.

- b. Pursuant to §352.051 of the Local Government Code, counties may restrict the use of fireworks in unincorporated areas of the county if drought conditions have been determined to exist by the Texas Forest Service. The normal process for implementing a fireworks ban is issuance of a commissioners court order. Such orders must be issued by April 25 for the Cinco de Mayo fireworks season, by June 15th for the Fourth of July fireworks season, and by December 15 for the December fireworks season.

4. Enforcement

Pursuant to §418.173 of the Government Code, a failure to comply with the Basic Plan, the annexes to the Basic Plan, or with a rule, order, or ordinance adopted under the Basic Plan or the annexes to the Basic Plan is an offense punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 or confinement in jail for a term of up to 180 days. A rule, order, or ordinance adopted under the Basic Plan or the annexes to the Basic Plan may set a lesser punishment for its violation.

B. Activities by Phases of Emergency Management

1. Mitigation

- a. Brief the elected officials and department heads on possible liabilities arising from disaster operations, procedures for invoking the emergency powers of government, and legal documents relating to emergency powers.
- b. Maintain current copies of existing disaster-related laws, regulations, and orders.
- c. Develop local procedures for invoking emergency powers.
- d. Prepare sample legal documents (included in this annex) for approval by elected officials.

2. Preparedness

- a. Ensure that Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction emergency call-out rosters include the Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Attorney, who should maintain current telephone numbers and addresses for the legal staff.
- b. Review plans and procedures.
- c. Review mutual aid agreements submitted to the jurisdiction for approval and prepare mutual aid agreements to be submitted to other jurisdictions for approval.

3. Response

- a. Advise the Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City Managers and emergency services staff on legal implications of response activities.
 - b. If required, prepare, have approved and signed, and disseminate legal documents declaring a disaster, terminating a disaster declaration, or invoking emergency powers.
4. Recovery
- a. Advise Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction city's officials on legal aspects of recovery operations.
 - b. Assist Fort Bend county and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction city's officials in preparing emergency ordinances, permits, applications for state or federal assistance, grant applications, and, if necessary, litigation.

VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES
--

A. General.

Overall responsibility for providing legal services to the Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City managers, the Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Councils, department heads, and other local officials during an emergency rests with the Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Attorneys. The Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Attorneys will be assisted by his or her subordinates.

B. Task Assignments

1. The Fort Bend County Judge and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City managers:
 - a. Will take such actions that are legal and necessary to manage the disaster at hand.
 - b. If the situation warrants, may declare a local state of disaster. Issuance of a local disaster declaration is advisable if an emergency situation has resulted in substantial damage to privately-owned or government property and state or federal assistance will be needed to recover from the incident. If a local disaster declaration is issued, it shall be given prompt and general publicity.
 - c. If the situation warrants, may request the Governor to declare a state of emergency.
 - d. If requesting state assistance to cope with a local disaster, should attach copies of any local disaster declaration that has been issued to the request for state assistance. See Annex J, Damage Assessment, for further information.
2. The Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Attorneys will:

- a. Advise Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction city's elected officials and department heads regarding the emergency powers of local government and necessary procedures for invoking measures to:
 - 1) suspend procedural laws and rules;
 - 2) establish curfews;
 - 3) restrict or deny access to a disaster area;
 - 4) control the movement of persons and occupancy of premises in a disaster area;
 - 5) implement wage, price, and rent controls;
 - 6) establish rationing for critical supplies;
 - 7) limit or restrict use of water or other utilities;
 - 8) use any publicly owned resource to respond to the disaster
 - 9) commandeer private property, subject to compensation requirements, to respond to the disaster; and
 - 10) remove debris from publicly or privately owned property
 - 11) restrict outdoor burning and use of fireworks.
 - b. Review and advise [county/city] officials on possible liabilities arising from disaster operations, including the exercising of any or all of the above powers.
 - c. Prepare and recommend legislation to implement the emergency powers that may be required during an emergency.
 - d. Advise [county/city] officials and department heads on record keeping requirements and other documentation necessary for the exercising of emergency powers.
 - e. Prepare and keep current this annex.
 - f. During an emergency, report instances of overcharging for emergency supplies, equipment, and repair materials to the Consumer Affairs section of the Office of the Attorney General.
3. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Secretaries and/or the Fort Bend County Clerk will:
- a. Publish required agenda of meetings.
 - b. Prepare a record of public meetings
 - c. Receive a copy of disaster declarations and documents extending or terminating a state of disaster.
 - d. Ensure proper protection of all records.

VII. DIRECTION & CONTROL

- A. **General.** The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys are responsible for providing legal services to the Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City Managers, Fort Bend County Commissioner's Court and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City's Councils and department heads and for preparing

all legal documents necessary for the conduct of emergency operations and the exercise of emergency powers. Supervisors will exercise their usual supervisory responsibilities over legal personnel.

B. **Coordination.** The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys will designate a person to coordinate with the Fort Bend County Judge and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City Managers and the EOC, if activated. The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys will identify staff members to be called for emergency duty and will designate those responsible for contacting such staff members.

C. **Line of Succession.** The line of succession for legal services personnel will be:

1. County Attorney
2. First Assistant County Attorney
3. Assistant County Attorney
4. The line of succession in each Joint Resolution Jurisdiction will be determined by each respective jurisdiction.

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

A. Readiness Level 4 – Normal Conditions

See the mitigation and preparedness activities in paragraphs V.B.1) and V.B.2) above.

B. Readiness Level 3 - Increased Readiness

1. The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys will review the potential emergency situation, determine staff availability, and review emergency tasks assigned in the emergency management plan and this annex.
2. The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys will designate the personnel on call for emergency duty.

C. Readiness Level 2 – High Readiness

1. Senior Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction city officials and department heads will be briefed on the legal ramifications, if any, of the potential emergency situation.
2. The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys will brief the legal staff on the potential emergency situation and plans to deal with it should it occur and ensure that on-call staff members are available by telephone and ready to report duty if called.

D. Readiness Level 1 – Maximum Readiness

The designated on-call legal services representative will proceed to the EOC if requested.

IX. ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

- A. Maintenance of Records.** All records generated during an emergency will be collected and filed in an orderly manner so a record of events is preserved for use in determining response costs, settling claims, and updating emergency plans and procedures.
- B. Preservation of Records.** Vital legal records should be protected from the effects of disaster to the maximum extent feasible. Should records be damaged during an emergency situation, professional assistance in preserving and restoring those records should be obtained from a firm specializing in these tasks as soon as possible.
- C. Training.** Legal services personnel who will be participating in EOC operations shall receive training on the operating procedures for that facility.

X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

- A. Development.** The Fort Bend County Attorney and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction City Attorneys are responsible for developing and maintaining this annex.
- B. Maintenance.** This annex will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section X of the Basic Plan.

XI. REFERENCES

- A.** Texas Division of Emergency Management *Local Emergency Management Planning Guide (DEM-10)*.
- B.** FEMA *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (SLG-101)*

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	Sample Request for Emergency Declaration
Appendix 2	Sample Disaster Declaration
Appendix 3.....	Sample Extension of Disaster Declaration
Appendix 4.....	Sample Termination of Disaster
Appendix 5.....	Sample Emergency Powers Ordinance/Order
Appendix 6	Sample Ban on Outdoor Burning

SAMPLE REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DECLARATION

The Honorable _____
Governor of Texas
c/o State Coordinator
Texas Division of Emergency Management
P. O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

Date:

Dear Governor _____:

The [County of _____/City of _____], Texas, is facing significant threats to life, health and property due to:

[Provide a description of the threat and the area or areas affected. Threats may include:

- riot or unlawful assembly of three or more persons acting together by use of force or violence
- the existence of a clear and present danger of the use of violence
- a natural or man-made disaster

(For these threats, a disaster declaration may be more appropriate.)]

The potential impact of this threat is:

[Provide an estimate of the impact on public health, safety, and property if the threat is not dealt with.]

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that an effective response is beyond the capability of the [county/city] to control. Pursuant to §433.001 of the Texas Government Code, I am requesting that you declare a state of emergency for [county/city], Texas, and issue appropriate directives to deal with the emergency; including:

[Indicate what measures that you want the Governor to take.]

Furthermore, I am asking that successive proclamations be issued and remain in effect until the threat of loss of life, injury, or damage property is contained.

A timely response to this request would be appreciated.

signature
[County Judge/Mayor]__*

* NOTE: The statute provides that either the chief elected or the governing body of a city or county may request the Governor issue an emergency declaration. If a governing body makes a request, this letter should be appropriately modified.

SAMPLE DISASTER DECLARATION

DECLARATION OF DISASTER

WHEREAS, the [County of _____/City of _____] on the ____ day of _____, 20__, has suffered widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property (or there is imminent threat of same) resulting from

[Briefly describe the disaster situation.] , and

WHEREAS, the [County Judge/Mayor] of _____ has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the suffering of people and to protect or rehabilitate property,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE [COUNTY JUDGE/MAYOR] OF _____:

1. That a local state of disaster is hereby declared for _____ pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
2. Pursuant to §418.108(b) of the Government Code, the state of disaster shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the [City Council/Commissioners Court] of _____.
3. Pursuant to §418.108(c) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the [City Secretary/County Clerk].
4. Pursuant to §418.108(d) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the [county/city] emergency management plan.
5. That this proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

ORDERED this the ____ day of _____, 20__.

signature
[County Judge/Mayor]

SAMPLE EXTENSION OF DISASTER DECLARATION

CITY ORDINANCE or COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER

WHEREAS, on [____ date ____], the [County Judge/Mayor] issued a proclamation declaring a state of disaster for [jurisdiction name ____] resulting from

[Provide a brief description of the disaster];

WHEREAS, the conditions necessitating declaration of a state of disaster continue to exist; and

WHEREAS, §418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code provides that a local state of disaster may not be continued for a period in excess of seven days without the consent of the governing body of the political subdivision;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT [ORDERED/ORDAINED] BY THE [COMMISSIONER'S COURT/CITY COUNCIL] of _____:

1. That the state of disaster proclaimed for the _____ by the [County Judge/Mayor] on _____ shall continue until terminated by order of the [COMMISSIONERS COURT/CITY COUNCIL].

2. This ordinance is passed as an emergency measure and pursuant to [local authority for emergency measures] and shall become effective on the _____ day of _20__.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this _____ day of _____, 20__.

APPROVED, this _____ day of _____, 20__.

[County Judge/Mayor]

[Commissioners court orders will normally include the signature of the county judge and the county commissioners.]

SAMPLE TERMINATION OF DISASTER

CITY ORDINANCE or COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER

WHEREAS, on _____, the [County Judge/Mayor], pursuant to the Texas Government Code, Chapter 418, (the "Texas Disaster Act"), issued a proclamation declaring a local state of disaster for the [County of _____ / City of _____] resulting from:

[Describe the situation that occasioned the disaster declaration];

WHEREAS, the conditions necessitating the proclamation of a local state of disaster have ceased to exist; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Disaster Act provides that a local state of disaster may be terminated by the governing body of the political subdivision or by executive order of the [County Judge/Mayor],

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT [ORDERED/ORDAINED] BY THE [COMMISSIONERS COURT/CITY COUNCIL]:

1. The [Commissioners Court/City Council], as the governing body of _____, hereby terminates the proclamation of a local state of disaster described in the preamble above.

2. A public emergency exists requiring that this ordinance be passed formally on the date of its introduction; therefore, this [ordinance/order] shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the [County Judge/Mayor].

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this ____ day of _____, 20__.

APPROVED, this ____ day of _____, 20__.

[County Judge/Mayor]

[Commissioners court orders will normally include the signature of the county judge and the county commissioners.]

SAMPLE EMERGENCY POWERS

CITY ORDINANCE or COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER

WHEREAS, by proclamation issued [date of disaster declaration], the [County Judge/Mayor] declared a state of disaster for _____] resulting from

[Briefly describe the situation] ; and

WHEREAS, said state of disaster requires that certain emergency measures be taken pursuant to the Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management; now, therefore, the following regulations shall take effect immediately upon issuance, and shall remain in effect until the state of disaster is terminated:

[Eliminate sections below describing measures that will not be used.]

1. CURFEW

- (a) A person shall not remain or travel upon any public or private property in the following area(s) between the hours of _____ and _____:

[Insert description of applicable areas]

- (b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to:

- (1) a person authorized by the Emergency Management Director to assist in the production of the health, safety, or welfare of the public; or
- (2) a person who remains or travels upon private property which is owned by him or upon which the person has been invited.

2. MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND OCCUPANCY OF PREMISES

- (a) A person shall not remain or travel upon any public or private property in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

- (b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a person authorized by local government officials to assist in the protection of the health, safety, or welfare of the public.

3. UTILITIES

All utility services shall be discontinued in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

4. FLAMMABLE PRODUCTS

- (a) A person shall not sell or give away gasoline or other flammable or combustible products in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

- (b) All gasoline stations shall be closed in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

5. EXPLOSIVES

- (a) A person shall not sell, barter, loan, or give away arms, ammunition, dynamite, or other explosives in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

- (b) All establishments where arms, ammunition, dynamite, or other explosives are sold shall be closed in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

6. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- (a) A person shall not sell or distribute beer, wine, liquor, or alcoholic beverages of any kind in the following area(s):

[Insert description of applicable areas]

- (b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to the sale of medicine which contains alcohol.

7. PRICE CONTROLS

A person shall not sell any of the following goods or services for more than the price the person charged for the goods or services on (date of disaster declaration):

- (a) groceries, beverages, toilet articles, ice;
- (b) construction and building materials and supplies, and earthmoving equipment and machinery;
- (c) electrical and gas generating and transmission equipment, parts and accessories;
- (d) charcoal briquettes, matches, candles, lamp illumination and heat unit carbides, dry batteries, light bulbs, flashlights, and hand lanterns;
- (e) hand tools (manual and power), hardware and household supplies, and equipment rental;
- (f) automotive parts, supplies, and accessories;
- (g) plumbing and electrical tools and supplies;
- (h) apartment, duplex, multi-family dwelling, rooming house, hotel and motel rental;
- (i) gasoline, diesel oil, motor oil, kerosene, grease, and automotive lubricants;
- (j) restaurant, cafeteria, and boarding-house meals;
- (k) services of roofing and building contractors, plumbers, electricians, mechanics, tree surgeons, and automobile wrecker companies;

- (l) medicine, pharmaceutical, and medical equipment and supplies;
- (m) blankets, quilts, bedspreads, bed linens, mattresses, bedsteads, towels, and toilet paper; and
- (n) furniture and clothing.

8. SUSPENSION AND MODIFICATION OF ORDINANCES

- (a) The following ordinances and regulations are hereby suspended or modified as indicated:

[List the relevant ordinances and regulations]

- (b) The suspension or modifications of the ordinances and regulations listed in Subsection (a) shall remain in effect until (date 60 days from the date these regulations are issued), or until the state of disaster is terminated, whichever is sooner.

9. PENALTIES

- (a) These regulations shall have the effect of ordinances when duly filed with the [County Clerk/City Secretary].
- (b) A person who violates any provision of these regulations, upon conviction, is punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

10. EMERGENCY

This [ordinance/order] shall take effect immediately from and after its passage and publication, and it is accordingly so ordained.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this ____ day of _____, 20__.

APPROVED, this ____ day of _____, 20__.

[County Judge/Mayor]

[Commissioners court orders will normally include the signature of the county judge and the county commissioners.]

SAMPLE BURN BAN

COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER
PROHIBITION OF OUTDOOR BURNING

WHEREAS, specific climate and environmental conditions now exist in Fort Bend County due to an extreme deficit in precipitation levels; and,

WHEREAS, drought conditions exist, which means the existence of a long-term deficit of moisture creating atypically severe conditions with increased wildfire occurrence as defined by the Texas Forest Service;

WHEREAS, the Section 352.081 of the TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE provides that the Commissioners Court of a county by order may prohibit or restrict outdoor burning in general or of a particular substance in all or part of the unincorporated area of the county if drought conditions have been determined to exist by the Texas Forest Service; and,

WHEREAS, the Texas Forest Service has determined that that drought conditions exist in all of Fort Bend County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT DECLARED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF FORT BEND COUNTY:

Section I.

That pursuant to TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, §352.081, a prohibition of outdoor burning is declared in and for the unincorporated areas of the County of Fort Bend, Texas.

Section II.

That this local prohibition of outdoor burning shall continue until rescinded or until a determination is made by the Texas Forest Service that drought conditions no longer exist, but in no instance shall it continue for a period of more than ninety (90) days, except with the consent of the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court.

Section III.

That this prohibition does not apply to outdoor burning activities related to public health and safety and/or trench-burning related to public health and safety that are authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for: (1) firefighting training; (2) public utility; (3) natural gas pipeline or mining operations; (4) planting or harvesting of agriculture crops; or (5) burns that are conducted by a prescribed burn manager certified under Section 153.048 of

the TEXAS NATURAL RESOURCES CODE, and meet the standards of Section 153.047 of the TEXAS NATURAL RESOURCES CODE.

Section IV.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

- A. That no person burn or order another to burn any material outside of an enclosure designed to contain and capable of containing all flames, sparks, embers, cinders, and ash produced by said burning.
- B. That this Declaration and Order apply to all unincorporated areas of Fort Bend County.
- C. That this Declaration and Order be enforced by a person elected, employed, or appointed as a peace officer under Art. 2.12 TEXAS CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE.
- D. That violation of this Declaration and/or Order is a Class C misdemeanor.
- E. That this Declaration and Order remain in effect until rescinded, but shall not extend beyond ninety (90) days from the date this Order, unless so ordered by the Commissioners Court of Fort Bend County, Texas.
- F. That this Declaration and Order take effect and be in full force from and after its issuance.
- G. That this Declaration and Order be given prompt and general publicity and be filed promptly with the County Clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I affix my signature this ____ day of _____, _____.

FORT BEND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

By: _____
County Judge

ATTEST:

County Clerk