



POLICY: AGRICULTURAL BURNING PROCEDURES FOR ALLOCATING
ACREAGE, BURN DAY DECISIONS, AND TRACKING

DATE: November 14, 2019

POLICY NUMBER: 34

GENERAL

Agricultural burning refers to the intentional use of fire for vegetation management, and also that which is defined in Rule 101. This policy establishes step procedures to be followed for the proper tracking and allocation of agricultural field acreage to be burned on any individual day.

STEPS

1. Designated Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) staff will meet by 8:15 a.m. of each working day to review CARB burn designations, current air quality data and local and surrounding areas meteorological data in order to determine if it will be a burn or no burn day and what the appropriate burn hours will be.
2. Designated ICAPCD staff will relay the gathered meteorological data for that day to the Division Manager, who will then recommend a burn/no burn day to the APCO. The APCO decision will be relayed to the appropriate ICAPCD staff.
3. Staff shall receive and record the following information on the Air District computer based burn program: Name of Permittee, Permit Number, Phone Number, Acres, Crop Residue Type, Canal/Gate, Crossroads, and the nearest City. The ICAPCD shall not allow more than 1,600 acres to be burned on any single day or no more than 400 acres per quadrant, unless authorized by the APCO, the Assistant APCO or a Division Manager. Agricultural billing invoices will be sent on a monthly basis to the permittee.
4. On a daily basis, ICAPCD staff shall plot each individual burn location on the ICAPCD map. The allowable acreage to be burned will be divided amongst the four quadrants of the valley. The quadrants will be bisected north to south by Hwy 78 and east to west by Hwy 111. Acreage to be burned will be divided equally between the four quadrants. However, acreage may be increased in any quadrant and decreased in another if meteorological conditions warrant. Prioritization will be given to "smaller acreage burns"* during approved burn days. Growers can choose to cut up a field in half or in quarters in order to get burning priority. Cutting up the field into smaller sections can be done thru disking (wheat fields) or utilizing a water truck (grass fields). Disking would require the farmer/operator to make a

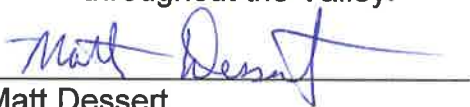
*Small acreage burns are defined as those fields that are 70 acres or smaller in size.

pass thru the middle of the field and cutting it in half or in quarters. A water truck can be utilized to spray water thru the middle of grass fields, thereby cutting the field into smaller portions. When utilizing watering, the farmer/operator will need at a minimum two water applications. After the field has been cut up, the Air District will assign separate burning hours for each section(s) of the field.

5. ICAPCD staff will schedule burn times for each field. Staff will contact the responsible agent for each requested burn and inform them of the scheduled burn time. ICAPCD staff will stagger the times of burns located in the same quadrant to reduce saturation of smoke in the area.
6. The ICAPCD shall provide attention to any field that is considered a "Special Burn" as defined in Rule 701. For the purposes of protecting the public from potential health impacts associated with agricultural burning, those fields that are within two (2) miles of a residential area, rural schools or adjacent to heavily traveled roads will be considered as "Special Burns". Such fields will require an Air Pollution Control Inspector to be present and give approval before the burn may be started.
7. It is the District's policy that agricultural burning within 2 miles of a school be minimized to the fullest extent possible on days when school is in session. Burns within 2 miles of a school will be prioritized for weekends, holidays or school closures, i.e., summer break, winter break, spring break. On days when schools are closed, the Air District will attempt to prioritize the burning of those fields within 2 miles of a school when allocating burn acreage.
8. ICAPCD staff shall convey a copy of the controlled burn log with the approximate ignition time to the Imperial County Fire Department (ICFD). After the above initial notification, the ICFD shall be contacted by phone or e-mail whenever the ICAPCD adds any additional fields to be burned that day.
9. ICAPCD staff shall maintain an agricultural burn complaint log (see Appendix 8). Complaint responses shall follow guidelines distinguished in Policy 17 – Complaint Investigation and Response.

Weekend/Holiday Agricultural Field Burn Procedure

1. ICAPCD staff shall meet on Friday afternoon, or the afternoon prior to a holiday, to evaluate the weekend/holiday weather forecast and discuss the forecast with the Division Manager. By 8:15 a.m. each weekend and/or holiday morning, ICAPCD staff shall make a decision on the burn hours for that day based on the current weather forecast, CARB designations, local air quality and current visibility throughout the Valley.



Matt Dessert
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