



Parker County Emergency Services District No. 7

Executive Summary:

PCESD No. 7 Fire Code Order (2026-001)

Overview

Parker County Emergency Services District No. 7 (PCESD7) adopted **Ordinance No. 2026-001** to establish a comprehensive Fire Code focused on enhancing life safety, protecting property, and supporting emergency readiness. This ordinance incorporates the **2021 International Fire Code (IFC)**, select chapters of the **2021 International Building Code (IBC)**, and the **PCESD7 Fire Protection Criteria Manual**, customized with extensive local amendments tailored to the region's urban-wildland interface and community growth.

This strategic adoption ensures the District maintains consistent standards for permitting, inspection, and enforcement, while allowing flexibility for residential and agricultural landowners and recognizing the unique character of Parker County.

Key Provisions

- **Adoption of Modern Codes:**
Integrates the 2021 IFC with appendices **B, C, D, F, H, I, J, K, L, M, and N**, select chapters of the IBC, and the locally developed Fire Protection Criteria Manual.
- **Adoption of NFPA 1142, *Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Firefighting*** may be used to assist the AHJ to establish the minimum water supply necessary for structural firefighting purposes in those areas where it has been determined that there is no water or inadequate water for firefighting.
- **Administrative Authority:**
Grants authority to the Fire Chief and designated agents to enforce the code, conduct inspections, issue permits and citations, and initiate stop-work orders.
- **Fair and Defined Appeals Process:**
Establishes an Appeals Commission to provide due process for those contesting enforcement actions or permit denials.
- **Criminal and Civil Penalties:**
Violations are enforceable by **Class C Misdemeanor** charges and/or **civil penalties up to \$2,000 per day**.

- Under Texas Health and Safety Code Section §775.119. **CRIMINAL PENALTY; FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ORDER.** (a) An owner or occupant of real property who is subject to an order issued by the fire marshal commits an offense if the person fails to comply with the order.
- (b) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.
- (c) Each failure to comply with an order is a separate offense.

Residential Construction Provisions

To support homeowners while preserving public safety:

- **Residential Exemptions:** Single-family and two-family dwellings with fewer than three units are **exempt from permit requirements** related to construction, renovation, and repair under this ordinance.
- **Sprinkler Requirements:**
Not required in standard single-family homes. May be required in attached garages, habitable attics, or structures with HVAC units in unconditioned spaces (Section 903.3.1.2.3).

Agricultural & Rural Exemptions

- **Agricultural Buildings:**
Structures classified under **Group U**, used for housing the owner's livestock or equipment, are **exempt from animal housing regulations**.
- **Agricultural and Rural Use Exemption:**
Site development for residential use with three or fewer dwellings and agricultural land subdivisions are also **excluded from fire code permitting**, unless public infrastructure (such as road extensions) is introduced.

Outdoor Burning

Permissible for silvicultural, wildlife, or range management purposes, and must comply with:

- **TCEQ's Outdoor Burning Rule** (TAC §§111.201–111.221),
- IFC open burning standards,
- PCESD7 Fire Protection Criteria Manual.

Burns must be conducted at least **300 feet from any structure**, and only by landowners or authorized individuals.

Fireworks Oversight

- Fireworks regulation is governed by **Texas Occupations Code Chapter 2154**.
- PCESD7 enforces provisions related to:
 - Retail firework stands
 - Public display permits
 - Storage and safety of explosive materials

Code Application to Existing Structures

Recognizing the importance of fairness and feasibility:

- **Existing Structures** are **not required to retrofit** to 2021 IFC standards.
- Instead, they fall under **NFPA 101: Life Safety Code**, widely considered **the least restrictive major fire code** in the U.S., ensuring safety without excessive burden.

Strategic Benefits

- Aligns local development with nationally recognized safety standards.
- Enhances emergency response capabilities through detailed hydrant spacing, access road requirements, and alternative water supply options.
- Establishes a robust permitting and enforcement system rarely found in rural ESDs.
- Protects residents and property without over-regulating homeowners and landowners.

Conclusion

Ordinance No. 2026-001 represents a balanced, forward-thinking approach to fire prevention and emergency preparedness. By adopting modern standards while maintaining flexibility for rural and residential properties, PCESD7 is reinforcing its commitment to safety, operational excellence, and community values.

Parker County Emergency Services District 7

1418 Greenwood Cut Off Rd. Weatherford, Tx. 76088

(817) 594-9473