



ORDINANCE #95-4
HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING AND RESTRICTING OUTDOOR FIRES
Hilltown Township Burning Ordinance

ARTICLE 1: PUBLIC POLICY

It is against public policy to permit uncontrolled unrestricted outdoor burning. The purpose of this Ordinance is to prevent needless public damage to life and property because of public and private nuisances caused by outdoor fires deliberately or carelessly set and improperly maintained.

ARTICLE 2: DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Ordinance, the following words and terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them therein:

a. Contained Fire

Any fire contained in an incinerator, fireplace or cooking grill or other contained enclosure designed for outdoor cooking, or a fireproof container.

b. Enforcement

Members of the Hilltown Township Police Department shall be designated Enforcement Officers under this Ordinance.

c. Fire

Any fire set or maintained outside of a building.

d. Person

Any individual, partnership, organization, association, agency, firm, estate, or corporation and any other legal or commercial entity.

e. Responsible Adult

An individual 18 years or older who is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol or suffering from any other disability which would impair his or her ability to properly supervise a fire.

f. Uncontained Fire

Any fire not included in the definition of a "Contained Fire."

ARTICLE 3: GENERAL LIMITATIONS ON BURNING

a. Compliance with Ordinance

- It shall be unlawful to burn, ignite, incinerate, maintain or permit to burn any materials whatsoever, of whatever nature, without complying with this Ordinance.

- Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent fire fighting training by Township designated fire fighting organizations.

b. Public Roads and Public Properties

No person shall set, start, feed, permit to burn, or maintain any fire upon any of the streets and/or rights-of-way, sidewalks, alleys or public grounds in Hilltown Township, except where a designated area has been set aside or reserved for this purpose and an appropriate container has been provided to contain such fire.

c. Safe Distances

- It shall be unlawful to allow any fire, including cooking, within an unsafe distance from any building or property line.

- No fire shall be set, started, fed, permitted to burn, or maintained where such fire may endanger any building or property, except where such building or property is used by the fire department for training purposes.

- Out-of-door fires shall be permitted only upon private property and shall take place at least fifty (50) feet from any building, property line, or road line.

- Nothing herein shall be deemed to prohibit indoor cooking activities providing that reasonable safeguards are maintained.

- Cooking grills may be less than twenty (20) feet from a building providing that reasonable safeguards are maintained.

- No fire shall be permitted to burn that produces smoke which interferes with the navigation of aircraft in the vicinity of the Philadelphia Glider Council.

d. Control of Burning and Unattended Fires

- No fire shall be allowed to burn unattended without a responsible adult being present at all times and without readily available fire extinguishing apparatus.

- Prior to a planned burn, person must notify chief of the fire department serving that individual's fire protection coverage area.

- No fire shall be permitted to burn whenever drought or extreme weather conditions exist or when a ban on burning has been placed into effect by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or other competent governmental body. The Board of Supervisors may prohibit any and all outdoor fires when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous.

- No fire shall be set that results in uncontrolled burning of vegetation (field fire).

- Outdoor fires shall be contained in a non-combustible container, covered with a wire screen of one-half inch or smaller mesh, or in other suitable non-combustible container, except for fires of leaves, brush, and/or natural, untreated wood which need not be confined to or covered by a non-combustible container.

e. Extinguishing Unsafe Fires

It is a violation of this Ordinance for any person to allow any fire to burn under adverse weather conditions or unsupervised, or otherwise in an unsafe manner. Any such fire may be extinguished by an official of the Township designated fire company or extinguished immediately upon request of such officials.

f. Hours

- No person shall burn or cause to be burned any paper, boxes, rubbish, leaves or any other kind of substances, nor shall any person or persons set or maintain any uncontained fire, or burn or cause to be burned an uncontained fire of any substances or material of any kind, outdoors, anywhere in the Township of Hilltown between sunset and sunrise.

- Contained fires shall not be permitted to burn or smolder between the hours of 1:00AM and 5:00AM.

- Recreational fires using natural, untreated wood and containing a fuel source of no more than eight (8) cubic feet are permitted at any time so long as they comply with all other provisions of this Ordinance.

g. Lawful and Unlawful Substances

- Burning of any organic, non-manufactured product is permitted so long as they comply with all other provisions of this Ordinance.

- Burning of construction debris, plastics, byproducts of manufacturing and processing operations, and wastes from commercial operations is strictly prohibited.

- Nothing herein shall be construed to permit or encourage the burning of any substance determined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the United States Environmental Protection Agency to be a hazardous substances; nor shall any fire be permitted to burn by any person if such burning is in violation of the Air Pollution Control Act or other legislation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the United States of America or any other competent body.

- No garbage or offal may be burned at any time either indoors or outdoors.

- Fires shall be used only to burn readily combustible materials.

h. Special Circumstances

In the event that it is necessary to have an uncontained fire of a size and/or at times other than permitted under this Ordinance, special permission must be obtained in advance from the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors. In the event any fire company is required to respond to a fire which violates the provisions of this Ordinance, a service fee may be levied by the responding fire company.

ARTICLE 4: ENFORCEMENT

a. Sanctions

Any person, whether as principle or agent, who violates this Ordinance or assists or abets its violation, shall upon conviction thereof, before any Magistrate, be sentenced to pay a fine of not less than Fifty (\$50.00) Dollars, nor more than Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars, together with the costs of prosecution, and in default of the payment of said fine and costs shall be committed to the Bucks County Prison for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days. Each violation shall constitute a separate offense, for which a summary conviction may be sought.

b. Equitable and Other Remedies

No penalty herein shall prevent the Township from enforcing this Ordinance by equitable, injunctive and other remedies.

c. Liability

The Township of Hilltown and its agents, officials, and representatives, shall not, under any circumstances, be liable or responsible for damages caused to any person or property by reason of the provisions of this Ordinance, or by reason of the conduct of any burning activity in compliance with the terms and provisions of this Ordinance. The individual person or party responsible for any such fire shall bear sole liability for any damages caused as a result thereof.

ARTICLE 5: SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this Ordinance shall be severable, and if any provision hereof shall be declared unconstitutional, illegal or invalid provision or provisions had not been included herein.

ARTICLE 6: REPEALER

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances conflicting or inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance hereby adopted are hereby repealed.

ORDAINED AND ENACTED this 24th day of July, 1995.

HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS






