



## Knox County Health Department

140 Dameron Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917

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Contact: Kaylee Coffman  
865-215-5722 office  
865-507-9797 cell

### **KCHD's Service Spotlight: Environmental Health Air Quality Division**

*A reminder to be mindful while participating in open burning.*

*Knoxville, Tenn.*— As autumn approaches, Knox County Health Department (KCHD) Air Quality division wants to remind the community to be mindful while participating in open burning and ensure they apply for an open burning permit.

“During fall and spring, KCHD receives the most open burning applications, and unfortunately, the most complaints too,” said Brian Rivera, Division Director of Air Quality Management. “Be aware of the impact of your health and that of your neighbors by reducing the smoke from open burning through small actions, such as letting the brush dry out before burning.”

According to the CDC, open burning can cause exposure to pollutants, which over time can deteriorate existing heart and lung conditions and have other harmful effects, including premature death. People at higher risk of experiencing harmful health effects from smoke exposure include children, older adults, pregnant women and people with pre-existing heart and lung diseases.

Knox County residents may burn brush wood at an established private residence, farming operation or established church congregational property after they've applied for an open burning permit online at <http://www.knoxcounty.org/airquality/> or by calling 865-215-5900. Open burning that does not require a permit includes cooking fires, recreational/campfire fires and construction site warming fires.

Air Quality will issue open burning bans on days the forecasted air quality index is 101 or greater, which indicates a violation of the EPA established National Ambient Air Quality Standard. The Air Quality division makes these determinations prior to 8:30 a.m. each day. Call the number on your permit each day prior to burning to learn if a ban is in place.

#### **About Knox County Health Department**

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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