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'Don't park on the grass,' local cities remind residents

By [Rissa Shaw](#) | Posted: Thu 1:36 AM, Jul 26, 2018 | Updated: Thu 7:27 PM, Jul 26, 2018



HEWITT, Texas (KWTX) The hot and dry summer weather has sparked a crackdown on a lesser-known ordinance on the books in many Central Texas municipalities.

Due to the combination of high temperatures and low humidity, cities including Hewitt, Waco, and Temple are reminding residents about "no parking on grass" ordinances.

"Parking on grass is a code violation," said City of Waco spokesman Larry Holze.

In Hewitt, residents can't park on grass or gravel (with some exceptions).

"Park on asphalt, concrete, where there's no vegetation," said Hewitt Fire Chief Lance Bracco. "Parking your car on dead grass right now with the dry conditions can create explosive fire conditions."

Bracco said he's seen it happen before.

"A catalytic converter can operate over 1,200 degrees and come in contact with dry grass which can ignite at about 500 degrees, so it wouldn't take very long and you'd have a pretty good size grass fire," said Bracco.

Although partly for aesthetics and removing 'eyesore' yards, Hewitt officials said the law was mostly created for safety reasons.



(Photo by Rissa Shaw)

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"It's not about keeping yards from having ruts and things in them, it's more of a

safety issue by having these vehicles parked on these unimproved surfaces,” said Hewitt Police Chief Jim Devlin. “If it’s an improved surface, the likelihood of fire danger is very minimal.”

Hewitt PD’s code enforcement unit was out spotting and warning ordinance violators Wednesday afternoon.

“We just encourage citizens, if they see this, go ahead and call up the police department,” said Devlin. “We can have code enforcement go out and deal with the issue and get compliance to get the vehicle moved.”

Those who don’t comply are subject to citations and fines which vary per city.

In Waco, Holze said a typical fine for non-compliance is around \$125 but could be as high as \$500, plus court costs.

“We normally would send a warning notice to the address (first),” said Holze.

In Hewitt, those caught violating the ordinance can receive a Class-C citation with a maximum fine of \$500, Devlin said.

Within the last month, both Hewitt police and The City of Temple have made Facebook posts reminding residents about the ordinance.

“Did you know that there is a city ordinance that prohibits parking in your yard?” read Temple’s posting. “Our vehicles cannot be parked on the grassy or unsurfaced areas of your front, side-street or rear yard within the residential zones in Temple.”

The ordinance was also intended to prevent groundwater contamination in Temple, the post went on to explain.

Hewitt Fire officials had some additional tips for residents this summer.

“Right now with the dry weather, be very mindful of all ignition sources, barbecue pits, parking cars on the grass, things of that nature, even while mowing you could hit a piece of metal,” said Bracco.

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