

Fire Precautions on Organised Bonfires and Firework Displays			
Policy...	Code of Practice✓	Guidance...	Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...	
<i>Approved by the University Health &amp; Safety Committee</i>			
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The purpose of presenting this documents to the University Health and Safety Committee			
Standard 3 year re-fresh✓	Changes in practice and/or legislation...		New Policy...

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## **1 Introduction**

It should be noted that a number of recommendations in this Code of Practice are strictly appropriate only to large public displays. However, organisers of smaller displays will wish to consider in each case to what extent the recommendations are appropriate to the type of display they are planning. Public safety is dependent upon good organisation.

## **2 Scope**

This organisational guidance applies to the Uxbridge campus as a whole.

## **3 Permissions and Responsibilities**

Prior to approving any Bonfire or Firework Event on campus, permission must be obtained for the Bonfire or Firework Event from the Head of Health, Safety and Environment and the Head of Security and Emergency Planning.

A Committee shall be responsible for the operation of the Event, with one member in direct charge of the Event along with another person identified as in charge of safety matters and not engaged in any duties or activities which would prevent them exercising general supervision. A separate Committee Member should be responsible for bonfire safety.

## **4. Liaison with Local Authorities and Emergency Services, and Fire Fighting Arrangements**

The Fire Brigade, the Police and the local authority should be contacted when planning a display, and where appropriate close liaison should be maintained and their advice incorporated in the display.

An adequate means of access to the whole site as well as to the display area should be agreed with the emergency services and be maintained before and throughout the display.

An adequate number of fire extinguishers should be provided, and certain stewards should be trained in the operation of firefighting equipment.

Suitable first-aid facilities should be provided.

### **5.1 General Arrangements - Site, Size and Location**

Regarding fireworks, the firing area should be as large as possible; for average size displays about 50 metres with an adequate area, ideally 50 metres by 75 Metres for a safe fallout area to the rear of the firing site. There should be a minimum distance between spectators and the firing area of 25 metres for smaller displays and 30 metres for larger displays. These figures are subject to change depending on the type of display i.e. with or without aerial fireworks and wind conditions.

The firing area and the fallout area should be away from trees, combustible materials, buildings, parked cars etc. Undergrowth on the site should be cleared and grass cut short in the vicinity of the display area.

## **5.2 Operators**

The number of operators should be kept to a minimum. When appointed, the contractor awarded the contract to run the display, will:

- Provide a risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) of how they will manage the firing of the fireworks.
- They will adhere to the manufactures instruction, which will be read and understood prior to using the fireworks in the display.
- Ensure that only competent persons will be permitted to manage the firing of the fire work display.
- Provide all persons managing the firing of the fire work display with a battery operated torch, which will be tested on the day prior to use.
- Ensure that there are correct sized spare batteries available for the torches.
- The number of persons within the firing site of the display should be limited to the minimum necessary for the operation of the display. (In no circumstances are more than three persons likely to be necessary unless their RAMS indicate otherwise).
- Be responsible for ensuring all live fireworks that failed to operate are collected and placed in buckets of water before safely disposing them.

## **5.3 Storing and Handling of Fireworks**

Fireworks should be unpacked carefully, remembering their fragility, and in a safe dry place, away from open fires and flammable materials.

Fireworks should be kept separate from packaging material and all fireworks other than those already set up for the display should be kept in a closed container, which should not be opened whilst any firework is burning.

## **5.4. Firing of Fireworks**

The contractor engaged to manage the fire work display will:

- Ensure that, well beforehand, the instructions on each firework must be studied carefully. The possibility and importance of a sudden change of wind should be remembered, as it can result in sparks and spent rocket sticks falling among spectators and smoke obscuring the display.
- All fireworks with aerial effects must be angled away from spectators to ensure that remnants fall where they can cause neither injury nor damage (i.e. in the fallout area). Firing over the heads of spectators should be avoided.
- A specially designed device for lighting larger fireworks (called a portfire) is usually provided with each display, and only this should be used for the purpose.
- Fireworks must be lit at arm's length. Portfires must not be carried in pockets, and should be kept in a closed container at a convenient place on the firing site.

- Should a firework fail to go off, under no circumstances should anyone return to it (see under section 5.7 for disposal of live fireworks).

## **5.5 Spectator Control**

All staff should know their duties if evacuation of the site becomes necessary. Arrangements and a drill for calling the emergency services should be pre-planned.

Spectators should be kept away from the firing site behind a suitable barrier. Firing should cease if spectators breach the barrier. The back and sides of the firing site should be kept completely clear for the duration of the firing.

The maximum number of trained stewards should be provided for crowd control. The ratio of stewards to crowd numbers is determined by the event risk assessment. It is recommended however that this should be two trained stewards for up to 500 persons and one for each additional 250 persons.

Every steward should be readily identifiable e.g. by wearing a fluorescent jacket. The stewards should not be engaged on any duties which would hinder the prompt discharge of their duties in the event of an emergency, including the evacuation of the site if necessary, and should be so placed as to be able to easily enter into the crowd. Overcrowding should not be permitted.

The number of persons within the firing site of the display should be limited to the minimum necessary for the operation of the display. (In no circumstances are more than three persons likely to be necessary).

An adequate public address system should be provided for larger displays and some means of addressing the crowd for smaller displays.

No spectators should be admitted to the display with their own fireworks and/or sparklers. Notice of this should be published in advance and exhibited at all entrances.

In enclosed areas a sufficient number of entrances and exits should be provided for spectators to be admitted in an orderly manner and to permit ready dispersal at the end of the display. The possibility of a sudden influx of large numbers of people should be borne in mind.

An adequate number of emergency exits should be provided. Entries to and exits from the display should be adequately illuminated and kept free of obstruction.

## **5.6. Bonfires**

The bonfire should be sited on open ground well clear of buildings, car parks, standing trees, etc. An 18 metres clearance all round should be regarded as minimal to accommodate a general ration of 1m high to 1.5 m clearance (example 3 m high bonfire 4.5 m) with a safety factor built in. To prevent unauthorised access to this area and to maintain a safe area a barrier should be erected (i.e. rope).

In order to light up the bonfire a torch for lighting up from a safe distance can be easily made from placing fire blocks at strategic position and lighting with a gas lance.

Flammable liquids should not be used to assist the ignition of the bonfire. The materials to be burnt in the fire should be carefully selected to exclude rubber tyres, hazardous rubbish, e.g. aerosols, tins of paint, bottles etc.

The bonfire embers should be properly extinguished before the site is vacated.

### **5.7. After the Display**

The firing site should be thoroughly searched by the contractor (Firework Company) for live fireworks which have failed to ignite; any found should be handled with care and put in water. They should not be burnt.

Metal litter bins, clearly marked, should be provided throughout the spectators' area, with arrangements for emptying them.

Appendix 1 Brunel University London Bonfire and Firework Event Policy Statement

**Brunel University London Bonfire and Firework Event**

**General Health and Safety Statement**

Protecting the health and safety of employees, students and/or members of the public who may be affected by the activities of Brunel University London (Brunel) is an essential part of risk management

The Council, the Vice-Chancellor and President and, with delegated authority, the Chief Operating Officer have overall responsibility for health and safety at Brunel and are committed to best practice and continuous improvement in determining and minimising any risk to the health and safety of our staff, students and visitors.

With regards the Brunel Bonfire and Fireworks Event; a safe and healthy working environment shall be established through an effective risk assessment process, which establishes appropriate workplace precautions and risk control systems, and maintenance of premises, plant and equipment.

The Brunel Bonfire and Firework Management Event Plan outline the roles and responsibilities of those organising and managing the Event, along with outlining a monitoring regime which will ensure that acceptable standards of risk control are being implemented and achieved in relation to the Event.