

BONFIRE & FIREWORKS DISPLAYS GUIDANCE

There are lots of things to consider if you are planning to host a bonfire and firework display at your club to ensure that the event is fun and does not end in tragedy.

Please note that the points listed below are not exhaustive and are provided for information only. You should ensure that you have obtained professional advice together with all the relevant permissions and licences to undertake the display.

Planning

- all Third Party Contractors (including any security & catering contractors etc) should have appropriate insurance with a Public Liability limit of Indemnity of at least £5,000,000 per Event;
- the Police and Fire Brigade authorities will be consulted at least fourteen days before the event and their recommendations have been complied with in full;
- the Firework Safety Code will be followed and all specific instructions given by the manufacturer of the fireworks will be complied with in full;
- the relevant HSE guidance will be followed by the organiser and appointed firework contractors (see below);
- an event risk assessment has been carried out, implemented and recorded by the organiser or appointed firework contractor;
- there is an adequate drop zone for the fall-out of rockets and debris downwind of spectators of at least 50 metres;
- spectators will be kept at least 25 metres from the display/ bonfire and the display area will be roped off;
- the fireworks display and bonfires will be sited at least 100 metres from any buildings or vehicles and there are no roads, railways, overhead cables, woodland, bracken or similar combustible materials in the immediate vicinity.

Special consideration should be given to major roads (i.e. motorways), main railway lines, airport runways. Organisers should seek permission from the relevant party.

Procedures - Organisers

- one member of the committee or other body organising the display will be in direct charge of safety matters and not engaged in any duties or activities which would prevent them from exercising general supervision;
- qualified first aid personnel will be in attendance and means of summoning emergency assistance will be available;
- there will be at least one steward in attendance for every 250 spectators (you will need to check the attendance);
- these stewards should have full instructions about their duties, adequate communications equipment (e.g. mobile phones, walkie talkies), and know what to do and who to report to in the event of an incident.

Procedures - General

- an appropriate check is made of the weather conditions (particularly with regard to high winds) prior to the event going live and if appropriate a check is made with the Fire Brigade as to whether to continue with the event;
- all specific instructions given by the manufacturer of the fireworks will be complied with in full;
- all fireworks will be supplied by a reputable manufacturer and will not be modified by the organiser or appointed firework contractor;
- smoking should not be allowed anywhere near the fireworks;
- any person firing fireworks should retire to a safe distance immediately once the fuse is lit;
- any person firing fireworks should never return to fireworks which do not light first time (30 minutes should be allowed to elapse before approaching and carefully dousing with water);
- no petrol or paraffin will be used for the purpose of lighting any bonfire;
- "shooting" fireworks such as rockets or roman candles will be placed inside a metal sided box of sufficient size to contain the device should it topple over;
- when on own premises a full inspection of the site will be carried out 30 minutes after the end of the display and any bonfire will be completely extinguished before
- leaving the site at the end of the display;
- the site will be inspected the next day in daylight to ensure no fireworks have been left.

Ideally an outside contractor should be used and the terms of the contract relating to responsibility for injury or damage must allow full rights of recovery against the contractor. In these circumstances organisers must also ensure that they and their appointed contractors will be complying with the HSE Guidelines HSG 123 'Working Together on Fire Work Displays'.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg123.htm>

Where displays are to be undertaken in-house by the organisations themselves (generally displays with less than 100 spectators) then organisers must comply with guidance provided by HSE Guidelines HSG 124 'Giving your own firework Display'.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg124.htm>

RFU HELPLINE: 0121 698 8001

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If you are unable to comply with any of the above please contact the above number. We will require a copy of your Risk Assessment and/or Event Management Plan, as a referral to insurers will be required to obtain sign-off.