The California State University
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

CPDC Bulletin

22-015

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Bulletin: Open Flame Devices (STERNO) Guidelines

Effective Date:	**October XX, 2022**
From:	**Construction Management**
Item No.	**Information**

Preamble: Open Flame Devices commonly known as “STERNO Canisters” along with portable Chafers serving trays are often used to warm food at various campus events. Open Flame Devices are commonplace in social settings at both at home and community functions; in general, the use is relatively safe if used properly with the right safeguards. The use of Open Flame Devices at CSU campus community events where hot food is served is no exception. With the right guidelines, their use at the CSU can also be in a manner that maintains the safety of students, faculty staff and guests on campuses.

Scope: These guidelines focus on the plan review, inspection and approval of Open Flame Devices in order to promote and ensure fire and life safety with consistent protection for persons and property during the use.

Attachments:
Weblinks: None

Applicability: All Structures owned or occupied by the State including Auxiliary Services. Design Services, Permit Process, Construction Services, Public Private Partnerships, Lease and Acquisitions.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): The Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is designated as the AHJ in the interpretation and application of the fire protection codes and regulations under Title 19 for use of Open Flame Devices and has the responsibility for ensuring compliance with all fire protection requirements.

Guidelines Description: The guidelines cover fire and life safety requirements for use of Open Flame Devices on CSU campuses. Although the OSFM is the AHJ over Title 19 and public safety, the CSU Building Official and OFS prepared these guidelines to reflect OSFM policies, procedures and good practices as it relates to the ongoing use and operations of buildings and structures on CSU owned and occupied facilities.

Approval process: The Campus event coordinator is responsible for coordinating the special event permit process with the Deputy State Fire Marshal. If open flame devices are planned for use at an event, the Campus Event Coordinator is responsible for securing a specific Open Flame Device permit from the Deputy State Fire Marshal for every use of open flame devices. The campus event coordinator must provide all information required for the standard approval process (i.e. type of event, event site plan showing campus location and whether indoor or outdoor, event layout plan(s) indicating room or tent or open space layout including furniture, seating, circulation, serving area, whether area is sprinklered, number of people attending, and unusual hazards) and in addition will be required to provide specific information regarding the planned use of Open Flame Devices (i.e. type and number of open flame device(s), purpose, specific location(s) being used, safety measures planned such as fire watch and fire extinguishers).

Guidance/requirements from OSFM:

1. Use of any solid fuel food heating devices (STERNO) shall be only provisionally allowed in fully fire sprinkler and fire alarm protected structures.
2. The area of use shall not be accessible or open to the general public.
3. All chaffing dishes using solid fuel cans must have some cage or guard protection around the flame device to ensure no combustible objects can accidentally come into contact with the open flame.
4. As per 19 CCR § 3.17. Guards for Heating Appliances.
5. Every heating appliance in any occupancy governed by these regulations which does not have protective features incorporated in its design, shall be provided with guards that will provide protection against ignition of clothing and other combustible material.
6. All tables shall be of metal/non-combustible construction.
7. Each group of tables shall have a portable fire extinguisher within immediate access and all food service staff shall be trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
8. New solid fuel (STERNO) fuel cans shall be stored in a safe/secured area approved by the DSFM.

9. Used fuel (STERNO) cans shall be immediately removed and placed outdoors in a metal storage bin to cool and remain contained. The location of the storage bins shall be approved by the DSFM.
10. At the conclusion of each day, the spent fuel cans shall be properly disposed of to ensure no fire risk.

Additional guidance:
To ensure and promote safety and prevent loss of life and property, The CSU Building Official and Office of Fire Safety provide the following guidance.

- Open Flame Devices (STERNO) used in heating food or liquids is permitted when in compliance with the following requirements:

- Open flame devices shall be placed on a sturdy flat surface and kept a safe distance from combustible materials, wall and window coverings, and flammable decorations.

- Open flame devices shall be provided with a means to prevent direct contact with or exposure to combustible materials including table coverings, decorations, and clothing.

- Only University Food Service personnel or designated vendors or contractors shall be allowed to utilize open flame devices, provided they comply with the guidelines for Use of Open Flame Devices of the California State University. Vendors / contractors shall be provided a copy of these guidelines and upon request they shall provide certification documents that prove their employees are properly trained in the lighting and handling of open flame devices as well as the knowledge of how to operate a fire extinguisher.

- Once ignited, open flame devices shall be continuously attended by a member of the Food Service staff, contractor, or vendor who has been trained in their use and in fire safety.

- A 2A:10BC fire extinguisher shall be within ten (10) feet of location where an open flame device is being used.

- Use of a metal fuel holder (chafer) with cover or similar secondary container is mandatory. Proper tools for smothering the flame must be available in the immediate area once ignited. Individual open flame containers are limited to 8 oz. maximum and each container when in use must be placed within a metal fuel holder (chafer) at all times; placing in open flame containers lose on tables is not permitted. See example below:



- All cooking or heating containers using open flame devices must be placed on non-combustible mats, ceramic or metal trays extending a minimum of 4” inches in each direction beyond the metal fuel holder (chafer) device. All combustibles decorative items (ribbons, dry leaves, paper, etc.) must not be place under chafer or non-combustible mats.

- The open flame device shall be placed under food or beverage tray before lighting. The device shall only be lit using a butane lighter or long-handled match. Food or beverage tray racks shall not be moved while STERNO is lit.

- Only heavy cloth table covers that are flame resistant shall be used, paper or plastic table coverings are prohibited. All table decorations must be flame resistant. Combustible materials such as plates, napkins, utensils, cups and similar products (e.g. decorative items, ribbons, dry leaves, etc.) shall be separated by a minimum of three feet from the open flame container.

11. STERNO must be immediately extinguished when food tray or urn is empty or no longer in use. When event is over, all STERNO must be extinguished immediately, capped and removed from the facility by food service personnel. Used fuel (STERNO) cans shall be immediately removed and placed outdoors in a metal storage bin to cool and remain contained. The location of the storage bins shall be approved by the DSFM.

The use of natural gas and open flame devices is less safe than the use of electric devices and inconsistent with new regulations in place in CA. The commercial market contains an ample supply of electric heating devices for food service and battery powered candles. If you chose to use electric chafing dishes in lieu of using Open Flame Devices (STERNO) to heat chafing dishes, you must check with Deputy State Fire Marshal if permits /approvals are required or not.

There are guidelines to be followed for the safe use of electric chafing dishes.

- All electric chafing dishes must be UL listed for the intended use.
- Ensure that all equipment and cords are in good condition and functioning properly.
- Ensure that the temporary power supply, including all temporary cables and extensions, is in good condition and properly installed.
- The entire electrical connection, including power load, wire size, connector size, power circuit size, outlet size and condition, etc., needs to be per current electric code and approved by a licensed electrician.

In the event of a fire University Fire Policy shall followed. The OSFM shall be immediately notified with procedures at the following link:
https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/10685/reporting-fires-on-state-property-2020.pdf

Attachments:
None

End of Bulletin