

OPEN FLAMES

Approved by Museum Commission on June 15, 2011

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide guidelines and procedures by which open flame devices and fires may be used at Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) sites and museums.

AUTHORITY

The following PHMC Policy is for the use of open flame devices, cooking fires and ceremonial fires and is drawn from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the National Park Service (NPS) and the Governor's Office of Administration's (OA) Management Directives and Administrative Circulars. The PHMC has the authority in the History Code to implement this policy.

POLICY

Organizations, groups, and individuals are not permitted to have open flame devices within PHMC buildings unless the building or area is specifically designed for such devices and written permission has been granted by the Executive Director of PHMC or his/her designee. Open flame devices are defined as candles, torches, butane burners, sterno or any other flame producing device. Kitchens with an exhaust hood and pre-engineered extinguishing system are exempt from this policy provided that the hood and extinguishing system have been properly/routinely cleaned, maintained and inspected. Maintenance staff, Division of Architecture and Preservation (DAP) personnel and construction crews are also exempt so long as the work process requiring open flame has been reviewed and approved by the historic site administrator or agency designee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizations, vendors, Friend's groups and individuals sponsoring events that include open flame devices must receive written permission from the historic site administrator or agency designee. Each event will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the site administrator or agency designee to determine the appropriateness of the venue for open flame devices, cooking fires or ceremonial fires. Open flame devices, cooking fires and ceremonial fires will only be approved when appropriate measures as defined within this policy have been taken to assure all conditions for fire safety have been met. In general, open flames of any sort will not be permitted in National Historic Landmark Buildings and National Historic Register Buildings unless and until a fire safety plan has been described in writing and approved in writing by the site administrator or agency designee. The standards for that approval are listed below and are the minimum standards. The historic site administrator or agency designee may, at his or her determination, require more stringent protections.

Guidelines (subject to having first met fully the terms and conditions listed above)

CANDLES

Where and whenever possible do not use candles: Utilize electric/battery “candles” or lanterns instead. Use reproduction hand held metal lanterns (such as 18th century punched tin examples) illuminated with a small flashlight. The Governor’s Administrative Circular (currently Administrative Circular 10-14) applies to holiday decorations and must be followed. There may never be open flame associated with a holiday decoration and all holiday trees must be treated with a flame retardant regardless of the decoration.

Candles are not permitted in offices, classrooms or other public/non-public spaces in Visitor Centers per the Administrative Circular (currently Administrative Circular 10-14) issued each year by the Governor’s Office of Administration. .

Candles are permitted if the area of use is outside of all buildings or breezeways and there is no local ordinance or code prohibiting them. Candles shall be lit outside and extinguished outside prior to the users’, groups’ entrance to any building unless an individual has been assigned physically (see Candle Watcher below) to oversee the open-flame.

Lighted candles may be permitted for ceremonies and functions of most rental groups, as well as for site-sponsored, catered events if and only if a Candle Watcher has been hired. A candle watcher is an **employed** individual, 16 years or older, who is hired by the support group (may not be a volunteer) who’s **only duty is to watch candles**. This employee may perform no other function like filling water glasses or greeting guests (they may provide guests with courtesy information, if asked). The individual must be on the support group’s payroll, a record of which hiring must be in the corporate record (minutes), the position must have a board-approved description and performance standards and both must be signed and dated by the employee. The employee must be present and paid at least ½ hour before the candles are lighted and ½ hour after the candles are extinguished. The Candle Watcher must be trained in the proper use of fire extinguishers and **must have demonstrated** to the site security chief or historic site administrator the **discharge** of a type A-B-C fire extinguisher. The historic site or museum must have the required number of fire extinguishers in the rental space **PLUS ONE**, and the extinguishers must be of the proper type, have a current inspection tag and certified to be operable. The Candle Watcher must be allowed to take appropriate (Department of Labor and Industry required) breaks and another individual with the same or equal training must stand in for the duration of the break/time away from duty. No exceptions.

Lighted candles are not permitted in or with any decorations. There may not be any type of flammable decoration around the base of any candle that could be lighted with

open flame, whether planned to be lighted or not. Metal or other non-flammable decorations are acceptable.

Candles must be securely fixed in sturdy, approved candleholders, enclosures, glass hurricane type lamps, etc. Assistance with obtaining such candle holders and/or other fixtures can be obtained by contacting the historic site administrator or agency designee.

Lighted candles must be extinguished and removed immediately after the event. Candles used by any group, as well as for site-sponsored and catered events, must be extinguished immediately after the ceremony or function is complete and removed from the building when the wax is cooled.

FIRES

Fires for cooking and ceremonies are discouraged unless the interpretive value has been justified in writing to the historic site administrator or agency designee and a written fire safety plan has been submitted and approved in writing by the historic site administrator or agency designee.

Do not ignite fires in historic fireplaces unless the flue has been cleaned and inspected; annually where used regularly, biannually when used rarely. Old chimney flues and fireplaces may contain combustible creosote, or may be cracked or otherwise damaged, exposing fire and sparks to wood building elements and cause a flue or structural fire. Hot coals on the hearth and sparks from inappropriately selected firewood can cause damage to buildings and collections. Only use cooking fires for an approved purpose by a staff member trained in fire safety policies and procedures including fire extinguisher training.

Hold cooking demonstrations outdoors in a fire ring away from any potential combustibles if possible. One staff member trained in fire safety policies and procedures including fire extinguisher training (must have successfully discharged a Type A-B-C extinguisher under the supervision of the site security chief or the historic site administrator) must always watch the fire whether outside or inside. The general location of the cooking or ceremonial fire must have an inspected (up to date), fully functional Type A-B-C fire extinguisher within 12 feet of reach in case of emergency. Children must always be kept a safe distance: 10 feet or more for small cooking fires and as much as 60 feet, or more, from large ceremonial fires.

Large ceremonial fires may only be permitted after all local codes have been met. Where historic sites and museums hold ceremonial fires, often related to the holidays, the local fire company shall be notified and invited to send fire protection equipment to the event. A meaningful cash gift to the participating fire company is a usual and customary practice.

Avoid the use of electric space heaters within historic structures.