

RISK COMMUNIQUÉ

Bonfire Fire Safety Considerations

Schools and communities occasionally use bonfires as a civic event to celebrate a sports team's success or to mark other special occasions. These events are intended to bring many members of the community together but can pose various liability and fire risks. The following are some fire safety tips to consider when planning a community bonfire:

- Establish the chain of communication and command with police and emergency responders in advance.
- Provide adequate fire protection, fire apparatus and emergency medical service during the display.
- Define and limit the size and height of the bonfire. If possible, have the event reviewed by an official from the local fire department.
- Clearly define the minimum distance to other structures and combustibles (including trees and the wood pile).
- Limit the material burned to only natural wood. Do not burn any wood containing coatings or combustible or flammable liquids.
- Call off the bonfire if winds exceed a pre-defined limit (over nine mph).
- Plan the location so that the anticipated smoke does not create a nuisance for adjacent properties.
- Assign monitors to control spectators and prevent them from accessing the site. Monitors should also be alert for any changes in the ash/cinder fall-out area due to a wind shift and be prepared to alert the fire apparatus operators.
- Clean-up is critical following the event and a fire watch should be posted afterward to assure that all cinders have been fully doused.

This is a sample guideline furnished to you by Glatfelter Public Practice. Your organization should review it and make the necessary modifications to meet the needs of your organization. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing risk exposure to personnel. For additional information on this topic, you may contact your GPP Risk Control Representative. www.glatfelterpublicpractice.com