

FIRE PERFORMANCE – OPEN BURNING

February 1, 2013

I. GENERAL

A. This policy is established February 1, 2013.

B. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to advise fire performance artists of safety considerations and practices consistent with fire and life safety codes and public assembly safety concerns.

C. This policy applies to all acts of fire performance art occurring within all areas where Eau Claire Fire & Rescue has authority. Fire art refers to performances or demonstrations such as fire breathing, fire spinning, fire juggling, fire dancing, etc. **Not included:** pyrotechnics and flame effects.

D. The business owner, event coordinator, and fire performer are responsible for all aspects of fire and life safety. Failure to follow the minimum requirements set forth in this document will result in immediate termination and/or issuing of citation(s).

E. Fire performance artists shall:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Provide a copy of the performer's photo ID to the Fire Prevention Division annually. For those performers associated with an organized group, it will be the responsibility of the organization to retain photo IDs of the performers and have those IDs available upon request. Each performer and spotter, or 'handler', needs to have photo ID on-site.

F. Audience - it should be recognized that audiences, especially youthful ones, may not fully understand the dangers associated with fire performance art. Every effort should be made to emphasize the safety precautions and dangers of such activity.

II. SPECIFIC

A. References

1. NFPA 1, current adopted standards adopted by the State of Wisconsin
2. NFPA 160
3. NAFAA (**North American Fire Arts Association**) performer safety guidelines (2.1)

B. Definitions

1. Fire performance art: any act (fire juggling/tossing, fire spinning, fire eating, fire dancing, etc.) in a public or private place that utilizes fire.
2. Venue: the exterior of property, facility, or building where flame effects are used, intended to be used, or are prohibited.

III. PROCEDURES

The following information is provided for use by fire performance venues and artists.

A. SAFETY

1. Space

- a) A 25-foot distance shall be maintained between the fire-involved item and any member of the audience and any combustible item within the immediate performance area. The boundary identifying this perimeter shall be marked and secured. No member of the audience may come in contact with any flame or fuel at any time.
- b) The performance area shall meet minimum perimeter requirements as demonstrated by the following:
 - i. A three-sided performance area shall be a minimum of 25' in all directions from a non-combustible background.
 - ii. Any area lacking a non-combustible background shall be a 25' radius minimum.
 - iii. A maximum of two performers shall be allowed within a performance area at any one time, with the boundaries expanded 5' in all directions (30' radius).
- c) Distances may be reduced by appeal through the Fire Prevention Division depending upon venue layout or for devices that are not thrown or twirled. Examples would include devices such as fire eating wands and small finger torch type devices. It must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the fire Inspector that any reduction in distance provides the same level of safety as the original distances noted above.

2. Spotters

- a) Spotters shall be trained in first aid measures for burns and be knowledgeable in the use of, and have ready access to, fire extinguishers and extinguishing agents.
- b) Two trained spotter shall be designated for each performance. One must maintain the perimeter, and the other spotter's sole function is to provide safety through constant monitoring of the performance, audience, and fuel storage area. In special limited circumstances, the number of required spotters may be reduced by appeal when approved by the fire inspector, an example of which would be one performer outdoors with 10 audience members.

- c) Additional spotters may be required by the Fire Inspector when:
 - i. There are three or more fire artists performing at the same time.
 - ii. There is a large audience in attendance.
 - iii. Anytime the Fire Inspector deems it necessary.
- d) Each spotter will have direct access to at least one 5-gallon open-topped bucket of water, minimum 3/4 full, with a clean cup or ladle provided for each fire performance area to cool any accidental burns. Additional water buckets may be required, dependent upon the circumstances of the performance and occupancy.

3. Excess Fuel

- a) Shall be removed from devices in an approved manner before they are ignited or used in front of an audience. A "spin out area" must be utilized to spin off any excess fuel from devices when appropriate. If any excess fuel or flame reaches the audience or unintended materials, the performer(s) may be cited and the permit may be revoked.

4. Extinguishing Agents

- a) Each spotter is responsible for at least one 2A-10BC minimum classification fire extinguisher for each performance to combat any flammable or combustible liquid fires. The extinguisher(s) shall be readily available in close proximity to each of the spotters. The Fire Inspector may require additional extinguishers, dependent upon the circumstances of the performance and occupancy.
- b) At least one wet cotton towel (minimum size 15" x 24") for each active fire performer and a wool or Nomex blanket or Duvetyne shall be readily available to extinguish the fire implement(s). The towel shall be white in color to differentiate its use from other towels that might be used to mop up flammable or combustible liquid spills. Colored towels for mopping up flammable or combustible liquids shall be stored in a metal container with a tight fitting lid.

5. Fire Implements

- a) It is recommended that wick material consist of Aramids such as Kevlar or Nomex in combination with fiberglass.
- b) Devices & equipment shall be checked before every performance to ensure strength and integrity. If items are tethered to maintain control from launching into the audience, the tether shall be of non-combustible material in good repair, without fraying or cracking.

6. Fuels

a) Common fuels include:

- Denatured Alcohol
- Lamp Oil (smokeless/odorless)
- Coleman fuel
- Kerosene (recommended for outside use)
- White Gas
- Isoparaffin Oil (Shell Sol T)
- "Allume Feu" brand gel fuel

Note: Gasoline is prohibited under any circumstance. Fuel may be allowed in either the original container with the cap secured in place or in a UL listed self-closing Flammable Liquid storage container, maximum one (1) gallon on-site. Glass containers shall never be used for storage of fuel.

7. Clothing

- ### a)
- The clothing of performers should be of fire resistant materials such as Nomex and/or PBI. If it is not a fire resistant material, natural fiber such as wool, leather, or cotton shall be worn. Synthetic clothing shall not be worn. Clothing should be snug fitting and not come in contact with any flame. If there is any unintended or inappropriate flame spread during a performance, the performers permit may be revoked and a citation issued.

8. Smoking

- ### a)
- Smoking shall be prohibited within the boundaries of the performance and fuel storage areas.

9. Permission

a) Individual Fire Performance

- #### i.
- Fire performance artists must contact the Fire Prevention Division on an annual basis to discuss their performance safety plans, locations, and schedule. Additional expansion of this performance throughout the year must be communicated to the Fire Prevention Division.

b) Group Fire Performance

- #### i.
- Fire performance artist groups must contact the Fire Prevention Division on an annual basis to discuss their performance safety plans, locations, and schedule. Additional expansion of these identified activities must be communicated to the Fire Prevention Division.

- #### ii.
- Groups will be required to provide an updated list of those members in their specific performance group. In the event a person is performing and

is not on the group's list, that person will be immediately asked to stop and the performance will be evaluated for continuance.

B. EVENT DIFFERENTIATION

1. Practice

- a) All safety practices identified in this policy shall be followed to the ability of practicality. In the event that the practice is conducted on private property, permission must be granted by that property owner. For practice sessions conducted on public property such as a park, the Fire Prevention Division shall be notified unless the annual plan has identified the specific practice locations and the times associated with the practices. **The Parks and Recreation Director shall be notified of the activity by the Performer.** Failure to comply with these requirements will result in immediate termination and/or issuing of a citation.

2. Performances – Small

- a) For performances conducted to groups of people that do not trigger a City of Eau Claire special events permit, all procedural requirements will be followed without exception. For performances conducted on public property such as a park, the Fire Prevention Division shall be notified unless the annual plan has identified the specific performance locations and the times associated with the performances. **The Parks and Recreation Director shall be notified of the activity by the Performer.** Failure to comply with these requirements will result in immediate termination and/or issuing of a citation.

3. Performances – Large

- a) For performances conducted to groups of people that are associated with a current special event, or potentially in time may warrant a City of Eau Claire special events permit as an individual performance, the group or individual must apply in accordance with the City of Eau Claire policy regarding special events. Once the special events permit is approved by City Council, any performance will follow the requirements set forth in the special events permit. All procedural requirements will be followed without exception.
- b) Notification to the Parks and Recreation will be conducted by the performer to coordinate location of any practice or performance to assist in coordination of any reservation and/or location conflicts.
- c) Insurance. It is recommended that fire performers have insurance while practicing and/or performing. Insurance is not mandated to participate in fire performance activities but is recommended. **Exception:** For those

activities that trigger a special event permit, insurance will be required for that special event as indicated in the applicable city ordinance.

d) Fire Performances Requiring a Special Event Permit

- i. Events, including street fairs or outdoor public gatherings, hosting a Fire Performance require a special events permit, which identifies the specific activities associated with the fire performance.
- ii. Included with the permit application shall be a site plan of the event including:
 - a. The dimensions of the performance area, seating, and equipment layout.
 - b. A written letter signed by the property owner or his/her representative authorizing the fire art performance.
- iii. Applications must be received as indicated in the City of Eau Claire special events policy.
- iv. The permit will be valid for the specific permit application or for one calendar year if indicated within the original permit, January 1 through December 31. The annual permit should be available on site at all performances and shall be presented upon request by any authorized City of Eau Claire agent.

C. INSPECTION

Private property owners or their representatives and event coordinators for street fairs or outdoor public gatherings are responsible to maintain the requirements as outlined in this policy during all fire practice and performance. Failure to comply will result in immediate stoppage of the event.

D. PRIVATE PROPERTY EVENTS

If a fire performance, practice or demonstration is located on private property, a written letter signed by the property owner or his/her representative authorizing the fire performance shall be present and available upon request. This letter shall clearly indicate:

1. Site Address
2. Business Name (if applicable)
3. Drawing with measurements outlining the performance area/perimeter
4. Printed name/title of the person signing the letter
5. Current contact information of building owner or his/her representative

IV. AUTHORITY OF FIRE DEPARTMENT

A. In accordance with the State of Wisconsin (SPS 314.001), in adoption of model fire code NFPA 1 and its associated authority given to the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), the Fire Chief in their particular jurisdiction, the AHJ shall have the authority to prohibit any and all open flames (NFPA 1 – 10.11.2).