

SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE

Safety at Firework Displays

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY | VERSION 2.00 | OCTOBER 2023

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

- All situations involving the storage and use of fireworks that could give rise to a flammable or explosive atmosphere are risk assessed.
- It provides a safe working environment by the control of fire and explosion risks arising from use of fireworks.
- Precautions are implemented in order to reduce the risk to an acceptable level and mitigate consequences.

SCOPE:

This Safe Working Procedure applies to:

- All managers including Head Teachers referred to as managers herein.
- All employees of Southampton City Council.
- All contractors working on behalf of the Council.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide Southampton City Council establishments/settings with information towards helping them to prevent fires and explosions or similar events that can occur when planning and putting on a firework display.

Public firework displays are becoming more popular because they encourage safety but are only as safe as the organisers make them.

This safe working procedure contains basic guidance to organisers and covers before, during and after the event. It should be noted however, that compliance with this safe working procedure cannot preclude every eventuality, and therefore it should be used as a basis towards implementing safe procedures but is not exhaustive.

Organisers of public and semi-public displays should be aware of the requirements of the Health & safety at Work etc Act 1974, which applies not only to those directly involved but also to the safety of the members of public.

2. Responsibilities

Senior Managers/Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring:

- 2.1 Employees, contractors and members of the public are protected from harm so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 Managers/Supervisors responsible for controlling firework events are aware of their responsibilities and competent to undertake their duties
- 2.3 Dangerous substances (fireworks) are risk assessed and control measures are in place to eliminate or reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- 2.4 Control measures are in place to mitigate the risk of fire or explosion
- 2.5 Emergency arrangements are in place to deal with any incidents
- 2.6 Sufficient information, instruction and training is provided to all the relevant people
- 2.7 Trade Unions are consulted as appropriate in compliance with SWP Safety Representatives

Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SWP and must:

- 2.8 Carry out a risk assessment when necessary. The risk assessment will be complementary to any COSHH, Fire and general risk assessments required by other prescriptive legislation and must be carried out by a competent person. A competent person is someone who has had sufficient training and experience or knowledge to allow them to carry out the risk assessment properly. The level of competence required will depend on the complexity of the situation.
- 2.9 The risk assessment should entail the identification and careful examination of the dangerous substances present or liable to be present, the activities involving them and how they might fail and cause fire or explosion or similar event that could cause harm.
- 2.10 The assessment should take into account the hazardous properties of the substances; the possibility and likelihood of a fire or explosion occurring and all potential ignition sources.
- 2.11 Provide suitable control measures to eliminate or reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the identified risks.
- 2.12 Provide equipment and procedures to deal with accident and emergencies.
- 2.13 Provide information, supervision, instruction and training to employees.
- 2.14 Provide relevant information and instruction to contractors.
- 2.15 Review any risk assessments/method statements provided by contractors in conjunction with any other relevant Council assessments prior to any contractor work commencement.

- 2.16 Ensure fireworks are stored and used in accordance with HSE guidance
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm>
- 2.17 Where two or more employers share a workplace, systems must be in place for the provision of necessary information to enable co-ordination for the implementation of precautions.

Employees must:

- 2.18 Follow control measures identified by the relevant risk assessments.
- 2.19 Inform their supervisor if any processes that present a risk of fire or an explosive atmosphere.
- 2.20 Undertake training required to fulfil their duties and follow any instructions given.
- 2.21 Wear any personal protective equipment and respiratory protective equipment provided.
- 2.22 Report any shortcomings to the relevant manager.

Contractors must:

- 2.23 Comply with control measures stated on relevant risk assessments. Provide a method statement as required prior to work commencement.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 The Health and Safety Executive have produced guidance on organising firework displays
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm>
- 3.2 Additional to the HSE guidance, the following should be considered;
 - 3.2.1 Grassy areas close to and around the site should be cut before the display, especially during hot, dry weather
 - 3.2.2 An area at least ½ the size of a football pitch should be allowed for the display
 - 3.2.3 Where possible, the site should be chosen to avoid prevailing winds blowing smoke across nearby roads
 - 3.2.4 The site should have as many entrances and exits as possible, especially if large crowds are expected, and these should be well lit and clearly marked
 - 3.2.5 If providing parking on-site, consider the location of parking to avoid damage to cars or persons from fireworks
 - 3.2.6 Access to parking should be well marked with separate entrances for vehicles and pedestrians
 - 3.2.7 Metal rubbish bins with lids should be used
 - 3.2.8 Advise local fire and emergency and police services in advance of the display and seek their advice with regards to planning the event
 - 3.2.9 First Aid points should be established, with qualified persons in place and locations clearly marked. Tubing to support fireworks should be made of non-brittle plastics and designed to withstand internal pressure, e.g. pipe made for water or gas supplies made from high density polyethylene
 - 3.2.10 The tube should have diameter that will provide the required support without holding the firework too tightly. A snug tube may damage the firework when it is inserted any may increase the severity of a misfire
 - 3.2.11 Where a support is attached to a stake or frame, attach it on the side away from spectators so that should an explosion occur the effects will tend to be projected away from spectators
 - 3.2.12 Always position fireworks as far as possible from spectators and at least at the manufacturers recommended minimum distance
 - 3.2.13 Never fix fireworks directly into the ground or use objects such as bottles to support fireworks as this is highly dangerous

- 3.2.14 Further information on setting up large displays can be found on <http://www.firework-review.org.uk/rockets-safety/>
- 3.2.15 If display may possibly affect Southampton Airport, consideration must be given as to whether an application is required as per Civil Aviation Authority [CAP 736](#)
- 3.2.16 Further assistance can be obtained from the Corporate Health and Safety Service

4. Safe Working Procedures Relevant to This Document

- 2.1 Workplace Health, Safety and welfare
- 2.2 Risk Assessment
- 2.3 Fire Safety
- 2.4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- 2.5 Personal Protective Equipment
- 2.6 First Aid at Work
- 2.7 Control of Contractors - Construction and Building Maintenance
- 2.8 Control of Contractors - Service Providers and suppliers of goods
- 2.9 Permit to Work

Note: Other safe working procedures may apply. Please review the A-Z available on the Council's [Health and Safety Intranet](#).

5. Main Legislation Relevant to This Document

- 2.1 [Health and Safety at Work etc Act](#)
- 2.2 [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#)
- 2.3 [Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations](#) (DSEAR)
- 2.4 [The Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations](#)
- 2.5 [The Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#) (CDM)
- 2.6 [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order](#)

6. Contact Address's and Guidance Links

- 2.1 [Health and Safety Executive](#)
- 2.2 [DSEAR webpage](#)
- 2.3 INDG370 – [A short guide to the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations](#)
- 2.4 L138 – [Dangerous Substances and Explosive - Approved Code of Practice and guidance](#)
- 2.5 L64 – [Safety signs and signals](#)
- 2.6 INDG227 – [Safe Working with Flammable Substances](#)
- 2.7 [Electricity in potentially explosive atmospheres](#)
- 2.8 [HSE Explosives - Organising firework displays](#)
- 2.9 [Event safety - Planning for incidents and emergencies](#)
- 2.10 [Further Guidance: Fire and explosion](#)
- 2.11 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents [RoSPA](#)
- 2.12 Institute of Occupational Safety and Health [IOSH](#)
- 2.13 Corporate Health and Safety Service [Health and Safety Intranet](#)

For full contact address visit the health and safety intranet [Useful Contacts](#).