



Duke Occupational & Environmental Safety Office

Operating Instruction	Author: Steven Stewart	Owner: Fire & Life Safety
Subject: Bonfire Safety Program 1-6	Approved By: Matthew Stiegel	Date Effective: 04-24-2023
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This instruction establishes policy and procedures and assigns responsibilities and requirements to ensure a comprehensive policy and program exists for the safe operation during all Durham City Fire Marshal permitted bonfires conducted on any Duke University property.

Objective:

The objective of the Bonfire Safety Program is to ensure that all Duke University students, faculty, employees, and visitors are properly protected and a safe environment is established and maintained during all Duke University sponsored bonfires.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Durham City Fire Department:

The Durham City Fire Marshal Office will issue Open Fire Burn permits as requested, and set requirements as necessary (e.g. Fire Watch, Bonfire Plan approval, etc.)

Durham City Fire Suppression Division will upon request assign adequate fire suppression vehicles, equipment and manpower. This will be at Duke University's expense.

A-Team (Duke University Student Affairs Staff & Students):

Notify OESO-Fire & Life Safety and Duke Police as soon as possible once a request is made from the students to have a bonfire. Notify OESO-Fire & Life Safety of the date and approximate time the fire will begin at least 60 days in advance.

Ensure that the appropriate amount of trained staff members are available for all bonfires.

Ensure that all A-Team members to include "Stokers and Extinguishers" representatives are properly trained in their respective duties and responsibilities. OESO Fire Safety will provide all training to A-Team members.

Approximately ten staff members are needed immediately adjacent to the bonfire area and will be responsible for making certain that rules and policies related to distance, types of fuel, and safety guidelines are adhered to at all times.

Approximately nine staff members are positioned at the designated entrances/archways leading into the bonfire area. These staff members are responsible for making certain that only the approved number of benches are permitted into the bonfire area at any given time. They will ensure that students wait with the benches until approval has been given to add a bench to the fire.

Designate one staff member to serve as the A-Team Command Post Representative. Ensure this person has direct communication abilities with the Duke Police Operations Command Post and the A-Team Senior Leadership at the bonfire site.

Ensure that a properly designated area is established for conducting bonfires. Area must be visibly marked with approximately a forty foot diameter border. Marking can be with field chalk, flag markers, or other suitable manner that provides a visible boundary for building the bonfire.

Bonfires are conducted in front of House P on the Quad.

Ensure that the appropriate number of students are available to serve as "Stokers" during the event. Three to five students will be designated as "Stokers" and one will be responsible for supervising the bonfire activities at the bonfire site. Stokers will be responsible for supervising the safe stacking, starting, and placement of all bonfire fuels during the event.

Designate approximately five to six students to serve as "Extinguishers". These students will be utilized at the conclusion of the bonfire to demonstrate a "ceremonial conclusion" of the bonfire. Students will use two and a half gallon pressurized water extinguishers provided by the OESO Fire & Life Safety Division.

Communicate with student leaders and the general student body about rules, regulations and expectations prior to each bonfire.

OESO-Fire & Life Safety Division:

Obtain all information regarding a request to conduct a bonfire and serve as the liaison for obtaining the proper permit from the Durham City Fire Marshal's Office. Ensure that a fund code is available for the permit costs.

Provide all necessary training for A-team members, both students and staff to allow them to properly and safely perform their duties and responsibilities.

Inspect the bonfire fire area prior to the event and remove any unauthorized combustible/flammable fuels found in the area. Ensure that the bonfire area is properly marked and that a hose line is in place at the hydrant in the quad.

Designate the appropriate number of OESO-Fire & Life Safety personnel to be deployed around the Quad at the main entry points (Approximately six Fire & Life Safety staff personnel will be utilized).

Designate one OESO-Fire & Life Safety staff member to be present in the Duke Operations Command Post. Designee must have direct communications with the Senior Fire & Life Safety Representative at the bonfire site.

Designate at least one OESO Fire & Life Safety member to assist the student "Extinguishers" in the event a decision is made to terminate the event.

Duke Police:

The Duke Police Department will coordinate with the Dean of Students' Office to monitor crowd behavior in an effort to: provide public safety for all members of the Duke Community and visitors, prevent the destruction of property (personal and University), reduce the potential for violence and address "quality of life" issues.

The Police Department personnel will support University Administrators, Dean Staff, and Fire & Life Safety personnel in enforcing University rules and regulations, while remaining ready to address criminal violations through law enforcement measures.

Communications Plan:

Effective and immediate communications is essential for the success of these events and safety of everyone involved.

All key leaders/personnel must be in constant communication with their respective elements and command center.

Operations Command Center:

Designated Senior Leaders operating at the immediate bonfire site must have two-way communication abilities capable of communicating with their representatives at the Command Center.

The Operations Command Center will be kept informed of all issues, concerns, problems, noted prior to, during and immediately after extinguishment of the bonfire.

An event log will be maintained in the Operational Command Center

OESO Fire & Life Safety Communications:

At least six two-way radios will be available for communications with the Operations

Command Post and intra-department communications.

General Guidelines:

The Duke Student Government will spearhead the bonfire event using this instruction as their guide however, at any time the situation dictates, the Duke Operational Command Center will assume control of the situation.

Bonfires will not be allowed until a properly executed permit is obtained from the Durham City Fire Marshal's Office by the Senior Fire & Life Safety Representative.

Weather conditions will be observed prior to obtaining a permit from the city and again, immediately prior to commencing the bonfire events. Conditions such as but not limited to drought conditions, open fire burn bans, high winds, will result in immediate cancellation of the bonfire

At no time will any form of flammable liquids be allowed into the Quad area during a scheduled bonfire event. Any flammable liquids found will be confiscated and properly secured by OESO-Fire & Life Safety staff members.

At no time will unauthorized fuels be used/added to the bonfire (furniture, University property, or any other materials designated unsafe by the Senior Leadership). Only "clean wood" and natural organic woods may be used as fuel.

The initial height (prior to lighting) of the bonfire shall not exceed ten feet (approximately two house benches in height) and no more than thirty feet wide (approximately three house benches in length).

Once the bonfire begins, the height will be limited to approximately six feet high (two benches stacked, or one bench standing on end) and thirty feet wide (must remain within the visible boundary).

During the actual bonfire, additional benches may be added upon the authorization of the Senior OESO Fire & Life Safety Representative at the bonfire site.

The last fuel will be added to the bonfire no later than two hours after the start time.

The bonfire will be extinguished approximately one hour after the last fuel is added.

It is the responsibility of all Duke Staff employees, Student Government, and other Senior Leadership present at the bonfire events to observe and assist with identifying any one violating the policies related to bonfires. Any person found violating any of the rules, regulations or policies related to this program will be subject to disciplinary action through the University judicial process. All Duke University staff members, Duke Police, and OESO Fire & Life Safety personnel are responsible for enforcing the policies and identifying to the maximum extent possible all violators.

NOTE: As always, Duke Police and/or the Fire Marshal has the discretion to pursue criminal action when they deem it appropriate.

Coordination and Approval:

Any requested changes to this policy will be coordinated with the appropriate department approval authority and the OESO Fire & Life Safety prior to the change being implemented. All departments annotated below have coordinated and given their approval via signature to this Bonfire Program Operating Instruction.

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