

PORTLAND FIRE & RESCUE

November 27, 2017



FIR 3.07 - FIRE PERFORMANCE ART

I. SCOPE

- A. This policy is established May 10, 2001.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to advise fire performance venues and 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 in which Portland Fire & Rescue has authority. Fire art refers to performances or demonstrations such as fire breathing, fire juggling, fire dancing, etc. **Not included:** pyrotechnics and flame effects (these are addressed in a different policy and require a separate permit).
- D. The business owner, event coordinator and the fire performer are responsible for all aspects of fire and life safety. Failure to possess a current permit and follow the minimum requirements set forth in this document may result in revocation of permit, future permits and/or issuing of citation(s).
- E. Fire performance artists shall:
 - 1. Be at least 18 years of age.
EXCEPTION: Performers age 16 to 18 may be allowed at the discretion of the Fire Marshal's Office with written consent from a parent or legal guardian. They must be under the direct supervision of an adult fire performance troupe leader or instructor.
 - 2. Have valid, state issued identification and Fire Performance Permit readily accessible at each performance.
- 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. 2016 Portland Fire Code, Section 308.3.2
2. Portland City Code Title 31, Sections 31.20.110 and 31.40.020
3. NFPA 160 Standard for Use of Flame Effects Before a Live Audience, 2011 Edition

B. Definitions:

1. Fire performance art: Any act (fire juggling/tossing, fire eating, fire dancing, etc.), in a public or private place, that utilizes fire.
2. Venue: The property, facility, building, or room within a building where fire performance art is or will be occurring.

III. GUIDANCE

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

A. Safety:

1. Space:

- a. A 20-foot distance shall be maintained between the fire-involved item and any member of the audience or any combustible item within the immediate performance area. Additional distance or barriers may be required when deemed necessary by the Fire Marshal's Office. The perimeter boundary should be marked and secured. No member of the audience may come in contact with any flame or fuel at any time.
- b. When multiple performers are within a performance area, boundaries must be expanded by 5' from all audience areas or combustible materials.
- c. The use of fire retardant treated materials shall not cause a reduction in required safety distances.
- d. A Fire Performance Art Venue's interior space must be protected by an approved automatic fire sprinkler system and have a minimum 12-foot ceiling height. Approval will be dependent upon design, height and materials of the ceiling.
- e. Distances may be reduced by appeal through the Fire Marshal's Office 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 that any reduction in distance provides the same level of safety as the original distances above.

2. Safety Personnel:
 - a. Two safety personnel shall be designated for each performance, one must maintain the perimeter, and the other's sole function is to act as a "spotter" and provide safety through constant monitoring of the performance, audience, and fuel storage area. In limited circumstances the number of required safety personnel may be reduced when approved. Example: one performer outdoors with 10 members in the audience may require only one trained spotter.
 - b. Spotters should 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. Spotters may be other performers not participating in the current performance.
 - c. Additional spotters/safety personnel may be required when:
 - i. There are four or more fire artists performing at the same time.
 - ii. There is a large, non-seated audience in attendance.
 - iii. Anytime deemed necessary by the Fire Marshal's Office.
 - d. Spotters will have direct access to at least one 5-gallon, open-topped bucket of water, minimum $\frac{3}{4}$ full, to cool accidental burns. Additional water buckets may be required, dependent upon the circumstances of the performance and occupancy.
3. Excess fuel shall be removed from devices in an approved manner before they are ignited or used in front of an audience. A "spin out bucket" shall be utilized to spin off any excess fuel from devices when appropriate. A shallow drip pan should be used in the fuel area to prevent runoff of any spilled fuel. If any excess fuel or flame reaches the audience or unintended materials, the performer(s) may be cited and the permit may be revoked.

B. Extinguishing Agents:

1. At least one 2A-10BC minimum classification fire extinguisher is required in close proximity to each spotter. Additional fire extinguishers may be required, dependent upon circumstances of the performance and the occupancy.
2. Each spotter shall have at least one wet cotton towel (minimum size 15" x 24") or a wool or Nomex blanket or Duvetyne readily available to extinguish the fire implement(s). The towel should 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 should be stored in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid.

C. Fire Implements:

1. It is recommended that wick material consist of Aramids such as Kevlar or Nomex in combination with fiberglass.
2. Devices and 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.
3. Common fire implements include:
 - Wands
 - Poi
 - Hoops
 - Palm or hand torches
 - Staff
 - Swords
 - Fans
 - Juggle torches
 - Large meteors

D. Fuels:

1. Gasoline is prohibited under any circumstance.
2. Fuel may be allowed in either the original container with the cap secured in place or in a metal lidded, liquid storage container, maximum one (1) gallon on site. Glass containers shall never be used for storage of fuel.
3. Common fuels include:
 - Denatured Alcohol
 - White Gas (Coleman fuel)
 - Lamp Oil (smokeless/odorless)
 - Isoparaffin Oil (Shell Sol T)
 - Coleman fuel
 - "Allume Feu" brand gel fuel
 - Kerosene (for outside use only)

E. Clothing: The clothing of performers and spotters should be snug fitting and made of fire resistant materials or natural fiber such as wool, leather, or cotton. Synthetic clothing shall not be worn. If there is any unintended or inappropriate flame spread during a performance, the performers permit may be revoked and a citation issued

F. Smoking: Smoking shall be prohibited within the boundary of the performance and fuel storage areas.

G. Permits:

1. Individual Fire Performance Art Conditional Use Permit:
 - a. Each fire performance artist must obtain an "Individual Fire Performance Art Conditional Use Permit" for each performance location. Permits will be valid for one year from the date of issue.

- b. Once an Individual Fire Performance Art Conditional Use Permit is issued, the artist may call the Fire Marshal's Office Permit Desk at 503-823-3712, or send an e-mail to pfrpc@portlandoregon.gov, within 7 days notice of an upcoming performance to add any additional dates to their permit.
- c. Each application shall be accompanied by:
 - i. A copy of the performer's photo ID.
 - ii. A written letter signed by the property owner or their representative authorizing the fire art performance. For outdoor events, the event planner must also sign the authorization letter. If performing in a public space such as a park or street, the authorizing representative is the Bureau responsible for that space, i.e. Parks & Recreation, Transportation, etc.

Letters must include:

- 1) The 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 their representative
- d. Artists shall ensure that locations where they intend to perform hold a current "Conditional Use – Fire Performance Art Venue Permit".
 - e. A permit with up to 10 performers may be obtained by the leader of a fire performance troupe.
 - f. Each performer must have photo ID on site, or the permit holder may be subject to revocation of the permit and subject to citation.

2. Conditional Use Permit – Fire Performance Art Venue:

Fire performance venues, including street fairs or outdoor public events, hosting a Fire Performance shall obtain an annual "Conditional Use – Fire Performance Art Venue Permit" through the Fire Marshal's Office. The approved permit will include a copy of this policy and will expire one year from date of issue.

EXCEPTION: For a special one-time event at a given venue, a single event venue permit may be issued at one-half the cost of an Annual Fire Performance Art Venue Permit. If a second permit is issued for the same venue within twelve months, the permit will convert to an annual permit after payment of the second half of the annual permit fee. The expiration date will be 12 months from the issue date of the first permit.

- a. The permit application must include:
 - i. A site plan of the venue, including:
 - 1. The dimensions of the performance area, seating and equipment layout.
 - 2. Dimensions of the room, aisles, and location of exits.

- ii. A written letter signed by the property owner or their representative authorizing the fire art performance. For public spaces such as a park or street, the authorizing representative is the Bureau responsible for that space, i.e. Parks & Recreation, Transportation, etc.
- b. Applications must be received 21 calendar days prior to the scheduled performance date to accommodate plan review and a site visit, prior to issuing a permit. Applications received after this deadline may be charged a double fee.
 - c. The permit will be valid for one year from date of issue.
 - d. The permit, approved site plan and Policy CE C-7 (FIR 3.07) must be available on site at all performances and shall be presented upon request.
 - e. Venues shall ensure that performers hold a current "Individual Fire Performance Art Conditional Use Permit".
 - f. Permit may be canceled if there is a burn ban in effect or the Fire Marshal determines the fire hazard is too great.
3. Inspection: Venue owners, 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.



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