

Managing Chaffing Fuels (Sterno)

1. Purpose

This policy describes how Boston University provides for a fire safe environment for patients, students, visitors, employees and staff. This policy specifically describes the use and handling of chaffing fuels, (Sterno). Sterno is a small burner often used to heat foods. Sternos are placed under chafing dishes, to keep foods warm for long periods of time. The brand-named “Sterno” has become the common name and is often used when referring to these small burners. Sternos consist of a semi-solid flammable gel inside a small metal case. The gel is formed by adding an alcohol to a saturated form of calcium acetate.

2. Covered Parties

All Boston University students, faculty, staff, visitors, and contractors; working in of occupying areas including, but not limited to; laboratories, classrooms, administrative areas, student housing, off- campus locations, and rental properties; in which Chaffing Fuels are being used.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)** is responsible for conducting basic fire safety training for university and hospital employees, inspecting university and hospital buildings to ensure compliance with fire and life safety regulations and codes, reporting deficiencies to the responsible departments for correction, and acting as a liaison to fire safety regulatory authorities (Fire Departments).
- 3.2 Boston University Public Safety** will act as the first responder and recipient of most emergency calls. In the event of a fire, Public Safety is typically first on scene and initially serves as the liaison to the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Public Safety will also restrict access and secure the scene.
- 3.3 Facilities Management and Planning (FMP)** is responsible for maintaining and testing fire protection and life safety systems in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal codes through its own staff or by using qualified contractors. FMP is responsible for maintaining, testing and record keeping for the following, but not limited to; fire alarm systems, emergency lighting systems, emergency generator, fire escape and balcony, fire extinguishers, and fire suppression systems (unless the suppression system is a proprietary system).
- 3.4 Dining services / Catering services** are to set up chaffing stations that are to be using Sterno in a safe manner. Never move or relocate Chaffing station with lit Sterno in place. Properly open and set up Sterno canister per manufactures instructions. **Wait staff are to be present in the room at all time when Sterno is in use.** Follow all other safety instructions provided by the Manufacture. Allow used canisters to cool before removing or replacing.

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3.5 Purchasing responsible for ensuring that any and all vendors, contractors, caterers, etc. providing services that may include use of chaffing fuels and or Sterno, are aware of and compliant with Boston University's policy on such equipment's use. As well as applicable City and State Regulations.

4. Definitions

BFD: Boston Fire Department

BUMC: Boston University Medical Campus; includes the medical schools; School of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Public Health and Graduate Medical Sciences.

CRC: Charles River Campus (Boston University)

Emergency Lights: Enables building occupants to safely escape the building in the event of a power failure. Equipped with back up batteries capable of powering exit and emergency lights for more than an hour, emergency lights become a critical element of a high rise safety system in the event of a power failure.

Inspection: A visual check of fire protection systems and equipment to ensure that they are in place, charged, and ready for use in the event of a fire.

Maintenance: The performance of services on fire protection equipment and systems to assure that they will perform as expected in the event of a fire. **Maintenance differs from inspection** in that maintenance requires the checking of internal fittings, devices and agent supplies.

NFPA: National Fire Protection Association

R.A.C.E.: fire plan to be initiated upon discovery of smoke or fire.

Sprinkler alarm: An approved device installed so that any water flow from a sprinkler system equal to or greater than that from single automatic sprinkler will result in an audible alarm signal on the premises.

Sprinkler system: A system of piping designed in accordance with fire protection engineering standards and installed to control or extinguish fires. The system includes an adequate and reliable water supply, and a network of specially sized piping and sprinklers which are interconnected. The system also includes a control valve and a device for actuating an alarm when the system is in operation.

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5. University Policy

Storing Unused Sterno Canisters

- Store canisters in a cool, dry place (40°F (4.4°C) - 120°F (48.8°C)).
- Provide adequate ventilation in area of storage and use.
- Store canisters away from all ignition sources.
- Keep canisters closed when storing.
- Store canisters away from food, utensils, and linens in a labeled storage area.
- Wash hands after handling canisters.

Disposing Used Sterno Canisters

- Canisters that are ***NOT*** completely emptied of their contents are regulated waste.
- Canisters must be properly disposed of at a facility permitted to accept such waste.
- Canisters must be consolidated in a container (size of the container will depend on the number of canisters being generated) that is clearly marked with its contents.
- Canisters that are completely empty with no flammable residue may be disposed of in regular trash or recycled.

Safety Tips

- **Do the following:**
 - Always use CAUTION when handling OPEN flame products.
 - Use a blunt object to pry off the lid (e.g., spoon).
 - Cup hand over the lid when opening a canister.
 - Remove excess gel from the lid.
 - Wash fuel residue from hands.
 - Place the canister in the desired location prior to lighting.
 - Be sure cans are placed securely in equipment.
 - Use a long handled match or butane lighter to light the canisters.
 - Use a snuffer paddle, regulator, or saucer to extinguish the flame.
 - Wait until a canister is cool before handling it.
 - Always avoid contact with hands and eyes.
 - Use a tool or burn guard sleeve to prevent burns when replacing canisters from under hot food containers.
- ***Don't do the following:***
 - **Use a sharp knife to pry off a canister lid.**
 - **Use a lit canister to light another canister.**
 - **Carry a lit canister or a chaffing dish or beverage urn with lit canisters.**
 - **Touch canisters while they are hot.**
 - **Allow loose clothing, napkins, or tablecloths near the flame.**
 - **Allow hair to fall near the flame.**
 - **Use hands to extinguish flames.**
 - **Blow out flame to extinguish the canister.**

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6 Related Policies and References

- ❖ Policy; 2.2 Fire Safety
- ❖ **Regulations**
 - Boston Fire Code
 - Cambridge Fire Regulations
 - Department of Public Safety, CMR state building code
 - National Fire Protection Association

7 History

Version	Section / Paragraph Changed	Changes Made	Effective Date
V.1	N/A	None, Original Version	2/13/2015
V.2	Roles and Responsibilities	Removed Events and Conferences	4/28/2015