

Standard Operating Procedure

Candles, Open Flames and Solid Alcohol (Sterno)



The University of Texas at Austin
Fire Prevention Services

SOP Number: 101-06

Candles, Open Flames and Solid Alcohol (Sterno)

PURPOSE

The following presents the criteria for use of Candles, Open Flames and Solid Alcohol (Sterno) on The University of Texas Campus at Austin.

DEFINITIONS

Candles and Open Flame Devices

Candles and other open flame type devices (including incense and potpourri burners, torches, fueled lamps, etc.) except as noted below are prohibited and SHALL NOT be allowed in all University of Texas at Austin facilities.

PROCEDURE

Exceptions for Candles and Open Flame Devices

1. The use of candles or the burning of incense may be approved in compliance with the following conditions:
 - a. Permission for candle or incense use may be obtained by requesting an open flame permit from Fire Prevention Services (FPS). Requests shall be submitted a minimum of seven (7) UT business days in advance of the requested date for use to FPS. Approval shall be granted or denied on a case-by-case basis for specific dates and locations only. To request a permit online visit the FPS webpage for Special Events Permitting at <https://fireprevention.utexas.edu/special-events-permitting/>
2. Candles/incense **SHALL NOT** be left unattended while burning.
3. Candles **SHALL BE** of low flame variety and SHALL be placed in a properly fitting, sturdy, non-combustible container.
4. When in use, it is highly recommended that candles be completely enclosed in a tip-resistant, non-combustible container constructed so as to be self-righting if placed in a free-standing position. The container, if tipped, shall be capable of containing the entire candle, dripping wax, and any convected heat within the container. No candle or open flame device shall be placed on a polystyrene holder or decoration.
5. Candles and/or open flame devices **SHALL NOT** be placed on windowsills or other areas that are unstable or, where they could come into contact with any readily combustible materials such as

drapes or curtains. All such items shall be secured at least three (3) feet away from the candle or open flame.

6. Candles/incense **SHALL NOT** be used in close proximity to heat or smoke detectors or sprinkler heads in such a way that heat or smoke may activate the device.
7. Candle and/or open flame devices shall be lit only during the event or function. Flames **SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY EXTINGUISHED** at the conclusion of the event or function.

Use of Solid Alcohol

Food Heating Devices (Sterno)

1. Solid alcohol (Sterno) heating of food is permitted when the following requirements are complied with:
 - a. Sterno is permitted in public spaces for food service operation only. It is not permitted in private offices or other non-public spaces. Only authorized personnel or designated vendors or contractors shall be allowed to utilize Sterno heating devices, providing they comply with the solid alcohol requirements.
 - b. A ten (10) pound BC dry chemical fire extinguisher or a K Class fire extinguisher shall be available within ten (10) feet of the serving table(s) where Sterno is in use.
 - c. An attendant (or attendants depending on the size of the event staff and Sterno in use) shall be trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
 - d. Water **SHALL NEVER BE USED** to extinguish a fire involving Sterno type gel fuel as water may actually spread the fire.
 - e. Use of secondary containers for Sterno, i.e. fuel holders with cover, is mandatory. Proper tools shall be available for the smothering of the flame if required, i.e. a snuffer paddle.
 - f. All chafing racks and beverage urns utilizing Sterno shall be placed on non-combustible mats, ceramic or metal trays extending a minimum of eight (8) inches in each direction beyond the Sterno container to prevent accidental contact with any combustible materials.
 - g. Sterno shall be placed under food or beverage trays prior to lighting. Sterno shall only be lit by means of a butane lighter or long handled match. Chafing racks or beverage urns shall not be moved while Sterno is lit.
 - h. Only fire-retardant table covers shall be permitted to be used. All table decorations shall be flame resistant. Combustible material such as plates, napkins, plastic utensils, cups and similar products shall be separated by a minimum of three (3) feet from Sterno.
 - i. Sterno shall be immediately extinguished when the food tray is empty or no longer used. When the event is over, all Sterno shall be extinguished immediately, capped and removed from the facility.

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Director, Fire Prevention Services

Date

REVISIONS

Date	Revision	Name
11/11/2021	0	Joshua Lambert