



1. Purpose: Outline the procedure to gain permission for the use of open flame devices in uncontrolled settings in order to control potential fire hazards and reduce the risk of loss of life or property.
2. Scope / Applicability: The scope of this procedure is to reduce potential fire hazard which, in turn, will reduce the risk of loss of life or property in all University residential and non-residential buildings as well as on any university property or grounds to include leased buildings or spaces.
  - a. Open flame devices are prohibited and unacceptable for use unless prior approval has been granted through Safety and Risk Management (SRM) except for those identified as out of scope.
  - b. The use of open flame devices fueled by propane tanks in university buildings is always prohibited.
  - c. Out of Scope: Controlled settings that do not require prior approval include:
    - 1) Laboratories when used in teaching experiments or research activities which are strictly supervised by a Professor, Instructor, Principal Investigator, or Lab Manager
    - 2) Food service activities under the supervision of Dining or Catering services; the use of stem or heating tray devices are permitted as long as the warmers are placed on a non-combustible surface.
    - 3) Maintenance staff or construction crews with an approved Hot Work Permit.
3. Definitions:
  - Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): Safety and Risk Management (SRM) is the appointed AHJ for VCU and is responsible for the administration of this procedure
  - Open Flame device: torches, candles, butane burners, lanterns, oil lamps and any other flame producing device are considered open flame devices. This includes "tiki" style torches, or other homemade flame devices that use a fuel oil, or flammable material to supply fuel for open flaming.
  - Laboratory: a room or building equipped for scientific experiments, research, or teaching.



### Safety and Risk Management

4. Background: Open flame devices carry with them the risk of unintentional fire and serious consequences when not used appropriately. Situations that do call for the use of open flame devices may be authorized under special circumstances by submitting a request to SRM. Examples of special circumstances include, but not limited to, the use of candles in memorial services or vigils, using pyrotechnic special effect devices on outdoor stages or indoor theaters.
5. Procedure:
  - a. Any group, organization or individual sponsoring a special circumstance activity or event where the use of an open flame device is desired must submit their request to SRM a minimum of one week in advance.
  - b. The request will include the following and be submitted via the Open Flames Device Request form:
    - the name of the individual responsible for the use of the open flame device
    - the layout of the venue
    - location where the open flame devices will be used
    - approximate length of the open flame
    - location(s) of fire extinguishers and other fire safety precautions (alarms, sprinklers, etc)
  - c. SRM will review the request for sufficiency and either
    - Request additional information
    - Deny request
    - Approve request
  - d. Approved requests must be physically located at the venue and in the possession of the requestor.
  - e. Violations
    - 1) Employees found using or allowing the unauthorized use of any open flame devices will be considered in violation of the Environmental health and Safety and Risk Management policy and would be subject to further disciplinary action up to and including termination.
    - 2) If an issue is found that is immediately dangerous to life and health, as the AHJ, SRM staff responds as follows:



- direct the individuals in the area to stop the unsafe operation immediately.
- notify the supervisor or principal investigator and Assistant Vice President of SRM. The Assistant Vice President of SRM shall notify the appropriate university officials of the risk to the university community.
- send an electronic notification the day of the occurrence to the supervisor or principal investigator, with a copy to the chair or director of the unit, with the noncompliance finding(s) and with a request for immediate corrective actions.
- work with the supervisor or principal investigator to develop a reasonable corrective plan that ensures the safety of the university community and satisfies all applicable requirements.
- conduct a follow-up inspection the next day or before the operation resumes verifying corrective actions are implemented.
- send an electronic notification to the dean or vice president of the area if the unsafe situation is not corrected.
- refer the case to the appropriate cabinet level member for further action

3) If residents and/or staff of a Residence Hall building are found using any open flame devices contrary to the outlined prohibitions, they will be required to dispose of the item immediately, and the individual will be referred to Student Affairs Administration staff to address the violation.

#### 6. References:

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Guidelines, Life Safety Code 101/13.7.2 2012 edition
- VCU Safety Manual: located on the [Safety and Risk Management, Safety Management webpage](#)
- Environmental Health and Safety and Risk Management policy: located in the VCU [Policy Library](#)