

# Flying Fire Lanterns

Fire Safety

Northfield Fire  
Department

December 2011





With the festive season in full swing, firefighters are reminding people of the dangers posed by releasing Chinese-type flying fire lanterns.



In recent years Chinese lanterns have become an increasingly popular choice to mark celebrations like Christmas and New Years or other holidays.

# Fire Lantern Safety

- Pros:

- ❖ Look great
- ❖ Mesmerizing
- ❖ Culturally significant
- ❖ Popular
- ❖ Cheap to purchase and operate
- ❖ No law requiring use or safety
- ❖ Fun for all ages

- Cons:

- ❖ Made of paper  
(sometimes treated)
- ❖ Frame constructed of bamboo,  
wood or wire
- ❖ Open flame needed to operate
- ❖ Unable to direct flight
- ❖ Unpredictable path of flight
- ❖ Possible hazard to aircraft  
When multiple lanterns used

# Fire Lantern Safety

- People are often unaware that there are a number of different risks associated with them:
  - Once the lanterns have been released into the air there is no way of controlling where they go
  - There is no guarantee that they will be fully extinguished when they land

# Fire Lantern Safety

- Our main concern is obviously the risk of a smoldering lantern sparking a serious fire and potentially putting people's lives and properties in danger.
- There may also be instances where the Coast Guard has dispatched rescue teams where lanterns have been mistaken for distress flares.

*(Thankfully, no instances have been reported in this area in 2011 according to the US Coast Guard, Atlantic City)*

## Fire Lantern Safety

Lanterns are made of paper Mache, craft paper, or in some cases treated paper to inhibit combustion.

Wire or bamboo to form the structure

Several fuels are used including alcohol, wax or other combustible fuels soaked on a cotton ball, cardboard or other improvised cup to hold material.



**These are made to be light. If made fire safe and non-combustible then they may be too heavy to fly.**

# Fire Lantern Safety

- Use:

Follow all recommended safety precautions and directions supplied by the manufacturer.

Have a fire extinguisher on hand

Class A (pressurized water)

Class A,B,C (Dry Chemical)





## Fire Lantern Safety

The risk of fires will only increase if the use of Chinese lanterns increases, therefore the Northfield Fire Department does not support the use of these devices and asks members of the public and event organizers to refrain from using them.

While these lanterns are undoubtedly a popular and beautiful sight, the potential damage they can cause is significant.



Remember, your lantern is a potential fire hazard. You are responsible for any damage it might cause.