

November 5, 2011
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Mr. Alan Cantara
Environmental, Health and Safety Mgr.
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RE: Summary of Open Burning Requirements
Jensen Hughes Project No. 1TWW00349

Dear Mr. Cantara:

As requested, Jensen Hughes has prepared this letter to summarize the requirements applicable to open burning that may be conducted by the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) on their campus in Providence, Rhode Island.

The types of outdoor burning that may take place include, but are not limited to, the following: fire pit with food; fire pit without food; outdoor burning for classes; outdoor burning for student projects; ceramics kiln; furnace for melting metals; burning of wood in a barrel to make charcoal for drawing; and similar uses.

Revision 1 updates the summary to address client comments and questions.

The code summary information is provided on the following pages. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any questions or if you need anything further regarding this.

Sincerely:

Jensen Hughes



Timothy Wensus, PE
Senior Fire Protection Engineer

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the requirements associated with outdoor burning activities that may be conducted on the RISD campus in Providence, Rhode Island. This document does not apply to the use of pyrotechnics or similar materials either indoors or outdoors.

Applicable Codes & Regulations

- + Rhode Island Fire Safety Code (RIFSC), which adopts and amends the following:
 - NFPA 1 – Fire Code, 2018 Edition as the Rhode Island Fire Code (RIFC)
 - NFPA 101 – Life Safety Code, 2018 Edition as the Rhode Island Life Safety Code
- + City of Providence Code of Ordinances – Chapter 9: Fire Prevention and Protection

Rhode Island Fire Code Requirements

The primary requirements regulating open burning are found in the RIFC and are summarized herein.

PERMITS

RIFC Section 1.12 authorizes the local fire department to issue permits associated with open burning or open fires; however, the local fire department is not required to issue said permits. Such permits are not required to be issued unless the department determines that the permit is necessary and that the department has sufficient resources available for the uniform and consistent administration of the specific permit program.

It is Jensen Hughes' understanding that the Providence Fire Department does not issue permits for open burning; therefore, no permits are required in order to conduct outside open burning that is in accordance with the requirements of the RIFC.

OUTDOOR FIRES

These requirements for outdoor fires apply to any type of outdoor fire.

Outdoor fires may not be built, ignited, or maintained in or upon any hazardous fire areas (RIFC 10.10.3.1)

Permanent barbecues, portable barbecues, outdoor fireplaces, or grills may not be used for the disposal of rubbish, trash, or combustible waste material (RIFC 10.10.3.2).

Outdoor fires must be located at least 50 feet away from any structure (RIFC 10.10.4.1). The RIFC defines a structure as “that which is built or constructed.”

Recreational fires must be located at least 25 feet away from a structure or combustible material unless contained in an approved manner (RIFC 10.10.4.3). An approved manner means a manner that is acceptable to the Providence Fire Department. Conditions that could cause a fire to spread to within 25 feet of a structure must be eliminated prior to ignition (RIFC 10.10.4.4).

The RIFC does not provide a definition or specific guidance as to what constitutes a “recreational fire”. Since the term is not defined within the code, they are defined within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-*

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary is the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning (RIFC 3.1). In this case, recreation means an activity done for enjoyment when one is not working.

Fires associated with classes incorporated as part of student art projects would not be considered to be recreational fires since they are associated with educational assignments.

Open, recreational, and cooking fires must be constantly attended by a competent person until such fire is extinguished (RIFC 10.10.5.1). The attendant must have fire-extinguishing equipment readily available for use (RIFC 10.10.5.2).

A garden hose connected to a water supply is acceptable. Otherwise, fire extinguishers should be readily available for use. The use of air pressurized water extinguishers should be considered as they are inexpensive, can be refilled and repressurized after each use, and are appropriate for the extinguishment of Class A Fire (solid fuels, such as wood).

The fire department is authorized to require any fire or smoke to be immediately discontinued if it is determined to constitute a hazardous condition (RIFC 10.10.10).

COOKING EQUIPMENT

In other than one- and two-family dwellings, no hibachi, grill, or other similar device used for cooking, heating, or any other purpose may be used on any balcony, under any overhang, or within 10 feet of any structure (RIFC 10.10.6.1). No such equipment may be stored on a balcony, except at one- and two-family dwellings (RIFC 10.10.6.2).

Listed equipment that is permanently installed in accordance with its listing, applicable codes, and manufacturer's instructions are permitted (RIFC 10.10.6.3).

City of Providence Burning Ordinances

The local ordinances enacted by the City of Providence are also applicable; however, the requirements of the RIFC are the requirements that are more typically enforced.

SECTION 9-9: BURNING IN STREETS OR HIGHWAYS

Igniting or burning any dead leaves, grass, weeds, empty boxes, crates, barrels, branches, limbs of trees, clothing, refuse, rubbish or waste materials, or substances of any kind whatsoever is prohibited in any street or highway within the limits of the city.

SECTION 9-10: REFUSE, RUBBISH, WASTE TO BE BURNED IN COVERED RECEPTACLE

Burning of any refuse, rubbish or waste material is prohibited.

Burning of clean cut firewood, or other clean burning fuel for personal enjoyment, is permitted in a safe, covered receptacle.

Special event burning such as water fire is permitted by permit.

SECTION 18-17: LIGHTING, BUILDING OR MAKING FIRES IN PARKS

No person, except one in the employ of the board of park commissioners or superintendent of parks, shall light, build, or make any fire in any park.

SECTION 23-27: LIGHTING, BUILDING OR MAKING FIRES

No person, except one in the employ of the board of park commissioners or superintendent of parks, shall light, build, or make any fire in any public square or public grounds.

Summary

The primary document regulating the use of open fires is the *Rhode Island Fire Code*; however, City of Providence local ordinances are also applicable.

Outdoor fires may not be made in any city street or park. Such outdoor fires must be located on property under the control of RISD.

Permits for outdoor burning are not currently required by the Providence Fire Department.

Outdoor fires used for any purpose other than recreation must be located at least 50 feet away from buildings.

Recreational fires must be located at least 25 feet away from buildings. Recreational fires are those that are conducted solely for enjoyment and not associated with classes.

Any outdoor fires must be constantly attended by a competent person until the fire is extinguished. Fire-extinguishing equipment, which may include a garden hose connected to a water supply, must be readily available for use at any outdoor fire.

Cooking may not be conducted on any balcony, under any overhanging portion of the building, or within 10 feet of any structure.

Before any outdoor fire is lit, compliance with the requirements summarized herein should be evaluated by the person in charge of such fire. Weather and other outside conditions should also be evaluated, and fires should not be conducted if such conditions are not conducive to safe outdoor burning.