



Safety Note 15

Bonfire and Firework Code

This advice is intended for displays held at University premises on or around the officially recognised dates within the UK. The Fireworks Act 2003 and the Fireworks Regulations 2004 require greater levels of control than previously on the use of fireworks. This reflects the large increase in complaints from the public relating to noise, neighbourhood safety and general nuisance from fireworks.

For large displays, a competent display operator should be engaged. They should have sufficient knowledge, training and experience to set up the display, operate correctly and clear up after the event. Advice is available in 'Working together on firework displays' (HS(G)123) available from the Health & Safety Services (extension 8888). A further guide 'Giving your own Firework Display' (HS(G)124) is available from the Health and Safety Executive website (www.hse.gov.uk).

The restrictions imposed under the regulations will enable managers to control the unofficial use of fireworks including any individual wishing to store items on University premises. The University Fire Safety Adviser (extension 8282) should be consulted where displays/use of fireworks is being considered.

The 2004 FireWorks Regulations make it an offence to:

Possess adult fireworks (all fireworks except party poppers and sparklers, etc.) in a public place by anyone under the age of 18

Possess category 4 fireworks (professional display fireworks) by anyone other than

There is a restriction upon the noise levels of category 3 fireworks - noise levels of 120 decibels must not be exceeded.

It is a criminal offence to set off fireworks in the street, or be caught in possession of fireworks if under the age of 18.

Further restrictions are imposed under the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 concerning the type of fireworks that may not be supplied to the general public, for example:

Aerial shells, aerial maroons, shells-in-mortar, bangers, mini-rockets and fireworks of erratic flight (squibs, jumping crackers, helicopters)

Fireworks sold to the public must comply with the following standards: Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 (as amended), Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the British Standard BS 7114.

Approval to hold an event involving fireworks must sought from the following and in compliance with Safety Guide 33 (

Recommended Site Plan for Firework Displays



	A	B	C	D	E
Maximum distance (metres)	50 approx	100 *	25	50 *	As required to prevent overcrowding

* The distances in columns B and D may have to be modified for certain types and sizes of firework.

Permission to have a bonfire on campus as part of an event must be obtained via the event notification procedure from event.approval@reading.ac.uk. One person should be responsible for setting up the bonfire including liaison with Grounds (who will be notified through the above email) and any individual organising fireworks for the same event. Substantial outdoor clothing should be worn that has flame retardant abilities, for example wool, approved flame retardant material i.e. 'Nomex'. Footwear should be either strong leather boots or shoes. The responsible person should have a first aid facility immediately available together with a fire blanket. A risk assessment for each of the individual activities must be completed and forwarded to Health & Safety Services for approval.

