SEC-032

Open Burn and Open Flame Operations at the University of Virginia

Effective Date Friday, January 18, 2013

Status Final

Last Revised Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Policy Type University

Contact Office Safety & Security (Department of), Office of Fire Safety

Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office

Oversight Executive
Associate Vice President for Safety & Security and Chief of Police

Applies To Academic Division and the Medical Center.

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Reason for Policy

The University strives to protect life and property by reducing the risks posed to University buildings, property, and occupants from the use and operation of an open burn and open flame.

Definition of Terms

Open Burning

Description

The burning of materials wherein products of combustion are emitted directly into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Examples include but are not limited to campfires, bonfires, and fire pits.

Open Flame and Open Flame Devices

Description

For the purpose of this policy, Open Flame and Open Flame Devices shall include but are not limited to candles, tiki torches and oil lanterns. (Note: Users of cutting torches and welding equipment must satisfy requirements outlined under separate fire code regulations. For information on these regulations, contact the Office of Environmental Health & Safety.)

University Facility

Description

Any defined space of the University, including but not limited to a room, lab, series of labs, building, or controlled outdoor area (which includes the Academical Village).

University Property

Description

Land or buildings that the University owns or leases and that is under the control of the Board of Visitors. University property also includes premises the University uses for activities of its offices, departments, personnel, or students.

Policy Statement

1. **Open Burning:**
   Unless otherwise permitted under this policy, a person shall not kindle or maintain or authorize to be kindled or maintained any open burning unless it is: (1) approved by the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the University of Virginia Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office as appropriate; and (2) conducted in accordance with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, Statewide burning laws, and applicable local City and County codes and regulations. [Note: The University of Virginia Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector is sometimes referred to as a "Fire Marshal." This individual has no delegated authority from the State Fire Marshal but does have extensive training in fire prevention and the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code.]
2. **Open Flame and Open Flame Devices:**
   Unless otherwise permitted under this policy a person shall not use an open flame or open flame device unless it is: (1) approved by the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office as appropriate; (2) conducted in accordance with applicable University or Medical Center procedures; and (3) conducted in accordance with the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code. A person shall not use an open flame or open flame device in any place where flammable, combustible, or explosive material is utilized or stored. Open burn and open flame device use and operation in any University facility or on University property must be operated and managed in accordance with this policy.
3. **Requests for Permission:**
   A request must be made to the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the University of Virginia Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office for the purpose of an open burn and open flame device use and operation. The Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety and/or the UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector will review the request to ensure the open burn and open flame device is used in accordance with and meets the requirements of (1) the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code; (2) Statewide Burning Laws; (3) Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety procedures;

(4) UVA Medical Center procedures; and (5) applicable local City and County codes and regulations. Each request will be reviewed to ensure the safety of the University's faculty, staff, students, patients and visitors; and for stewardship of the University's facilities and property. The Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector shall notify the requesting party of the approval or denial of a request for permission granted under this section permitting an open burn or use of an open flame or open flame device. The Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector shall concurrently notify the University Police Division of any approval or denial under this section and confirm receipt by the University Police Division.

4. **Persons Lawfully in Charge:**
   In addition to University personnel responsible for the management or supervision of University property and activities, the fire code representative from the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office (or designee) or University law enforcement officers are lawfully in charge of University property and facilities for purposes of: forbidding entry upon University property or into a University facility or prohibiting remaining upon University property or within a University facility while conducting open burning or while in possession of an open flame or open flame device; and ordering any fire which is deemed as non-compliant with this policy or which creates a hazard or nuisance to be extinguished.
5. **Exemptions:**
   The following are exempted from the requirements of this policy:
   - Outdoor cooking operations where propane and charcoal are used in a safe manner. Ashes, cinders, and coals shall be disposed of in an approved manner. Contact the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the University of Virginia Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector for disposal guidelines.
   - Indoor and outdoor use of Sterno, for the purpose of warming foods. Such use should be maintained and operated in an approved manner. Contact the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or the University of Virginia Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector for operating guidelines.
   - Laboratory flame producing equipment.

6. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies and may result in prosecution in accordance with state and federal law. This includes complying with the applicable adopted version of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code along with the associated legal proceedings to restrain, correct, or abate such alleged violation.

   Direct questions about this policy to the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety.

Procedures

Academic Division: All requests for the use and operation of an open burn or an open flame device must be submitted to the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety at least three weeks prior to the proposed activity. Review of proposals of a routine nature (i.e., similar to previously approved activities) may be expedited at the discretion of the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety. Requests may be submitted by calling 434-243-1711; emailing **fire-safety@virginia.edu**; or completing a *Request Permission for Open Burn/Open Flame* form.

Medical Center: All requests for the use and operation of an open burn and open flame device at the UVA Medical Center must be submitted to the UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector by calling 982-6420 or emailing your request to **aco9m@virginia.edu** as soon as possible.

Additional requirements may apply at the discretion of the fire code representative from the Department of Safety & Security, Office of Fire Safety or UVA Medical Center Fire Protection Inspector's Office.

Related Information

Fire Extinguisher training is available through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.
SEC-018: Fireworks Display
SEC-028: No Smoking or Vaping

Major Category Safety, Security and Environmental Quality

Next Scheduled Review Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Revision History

Updated Contact Office & Oversight Exec 8/21/24; Confirmed 1/13/23; Confirmed 10/25/19; Updated 9/13/17.

Approved By Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

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