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## Bonfire Policy

### **Purpose**

Sets forth procedures for having bonfires on college property.

### **To Whom Does the Policy Apply**

Ramapo College community

### **Related Documents**

- New Jersey Uniform Fire Code N.J.A.C. 5:70-2.7(a)3.i. and N.J.A.C. 5:70-3, 307 (attached)
- Forest Fire Laws of Title 13, Chapter 9 (attached)
- <https://www.ramapo.edu/ehs/fire-safety/>

### **Contacts**

College Fire Marshal (201).684.6252

### **Enforcement of Policy**

The policy will be enforced by the College Fire Marshal and the Office of Public Safety. The Division of Fire Safety will enforce applicable provisions of the New Jersey State Fire Code.

### **Background**

The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) over all New Jersey State Colleges and Universities.

### **Definition**

A bonfire is defined as an outdoor fire utilized for ceremonial purposes.

### **Procedure**

When a bonfire is planned on College property, a review of the plans and request will be conducted. This document provides general guidelines for those who plan a bonfire as part of a College event.

### **General Information**

1. Plans for all bonfire events must be approved by the President's Cabinet.
2. After approval is received from Cabinet the Bonfire Request forms will be submitted to the Office of Events and Conferences sixty (60) days prior to the event to allow for ample time to review the plans and engage the necessary resources.
3. Requests will be reviewed by the Office of Events and Conferences and other applicable campus departments and confirm date availability.
4. A designated event coordinator shall be appointed by the requesting group to act as the main point of contact, maintain contact with the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) to coordinate and manage the

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bonfire event (ordering/delivery of wood, entering work orders, communication with the College Fire Marshal, etc.).

5. To insure personal safety, the local Fire Department is the only one authorized to light or extinguish the fire.

### Requirements

1. All approved bonfires are to be held on the gravel lot adjacent North Field.
2. All bonfires will have maximum dimensions of 5'x5'x5' and maximum burn time of 3 hours.
3. The Fire Marshal will request the required Type 1 permit from the NJ Division of Fire Safety. The Fire Marshal will also contact the local Fire Department to request a standby at the bonfire.
4. The Event Coordinator shall ensure that at least one member of the College's Public Safety Department is on standby prior to the start of the bonfire.
5. Fuel for the bonfire will consist of seasoned dry firewood. All excess wood and debris must be removed from the site once the fire is bonfire is constructed.
6. Accelerants (gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel, etc.) or any other flammables are not permitted to start or re-start the bonfire.
7. All persons involved in the construction of the bonfire must wear the proper personal protective equipment. This includes safety glasses, shoes with substantial soles, and leather work gloves.
8. Potential severe weather or steady winds of 10 mph or higher may delay or cancel the bonfire. If wind speeds increase to a dangerous level or weather conditions worsen after the bonfire is started, the fire may be extinguished to protect the public and nearby property.
9. No fire shall be burned or ignited when the Fire Danger Rating System is Moderate or above. Current restrictions can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/fire/firedanger-restrictions.html>
10. Bonfires shall be allowed to burn for a maximum of 3 continuous hours.
11. No fire shall be burned or ignited while any vehicles are present within the confines of the designated site of the bonfire. Exception, the fire department's apparatus.
12. Open Burning shall not be offensive or objectionable due to smoke or odor emissions when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous; if so, the State Fire Marshal or designee shall order the fire extinguished.
13. The fire shall not be ignited until a 50' radius is marked off with caution tape that is clearly visible. The caution tape shall be at least 4' high off the ground throughout the radius. Spectators shall not enter the 50' radius around the fire and shall also maintain a safe distance so as not to endanger themselves from burns from direct flames, embers or the radiant heat from the bonfire.
14. There shall not be any dry vegetation or any other flammable or combustible materials within the 50' radius.
15. Personnel allowed within the 50' radius are strictly limited to the College Fire Marshal, State Fire Inspectors, State Forestry representatives, Mahwah Fire Department firefighters, and the person permitted to ignite the fire. Anyone within the 50' radius should wear fire protective clothing/turn out gear.
16. The fire shall be extinguished at designated event end time (but not to exceed 3 hours) or earlier at the discretion of either the: State Fire Inspector, the State Forestry representative, the College Fire Marshal, the Mahwah Fire Chief, or the Campus Public Safety Officer in charge; however, the State Fire Inspector has overall jurisdiction.
17. The fire shall begin to be fully extinguished by the Mahwah FD and shall not be subsequently re-ignited.
18. The remaining debris from the bonfire shall be disposed of in metal container(s) and properly covered to prevent spontaneous re-ignition. The debris shall not be mixed with any other type of trash or garbage. It is required that the remaining debris from the bonfire be removed from the parking lot or any other designated site of the bonfire before parking is permitted in the area.

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## **N.J. Uniform Fire Code Regulations**

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### **307.1 General**

A person shall not kindle or maintain or authorize to be kindled or maintained any open burning unless conducted and approved in accordance with Sections 307.1.1 through 307.5.

#### **307.1.1 Prohibited Open Burning**

Open burning shall be prohibited when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make such fires hazardous.

*Exception: Forest Fire Service. In districts for which Forest Fire Wardens have been appointed in accordance with the General Forest Fire Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9-44.1 et seq.), any fire within, or adjacent to, any forest that has the potential to cause a wildfire is prohibited by this subchapter, without first obtaining a permit from the State Forest Fire Service in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection..*

#### **307.2.1 Approval required**

Open burning shall be allowed after obtaining a permit from the fire official for a bonfire. All permits shall be requested by and issued to the owner or agent of the land upon which the bonfire is to be kindled.

##### **307.2.1.1 Application**

Applications for open burning shall be submitted in writing at least ten days before the fire is set and shall be in such form and contain such information as required by the fire official. Such applications shall contain, as a minimum, information regarding the purpose of the proposed burning, the nature and quantities of material to be burned, the date when such burning will take place, the location of the burning site and the on-site fire-extinguishing equipment to be provided.

#### **307.3 Extinguishment Authority**

Where open burning creates or adds to a hazardous situation, or a required permit for open burning has not been obtained, the fire code official is authorized to order the extinguishment of the open burning operation.

#### **307.4 Location**

The location for open burning shall be not less than 50 feet (15 240 mm) from any structure, and provisions shall be made to prevent the fire from spreading to within 50 feet (15 240 mm) of any structure.

Exceptions:

1. Fires in approved containers that are not less than 15 feet (4572 mm) from a structure.
2. The minimum required distance from a structure shall be 25 feet (7620 mm) where the pile size is 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height.

#### **307.4.1 Bonfires**

A bonfire shall not be conducted within 50 feet (15 240 mm) of a structure or combustible material unless the fire is contained in a barbecue pit. Conditions that could cause a fire to spread within 50 feet (15 240 mm) of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

##### **307.4.1.1 Bonfire size and duration**

A bonfire shall not be more than 5 feet (1524 mm) by 5 feet (1524 mm) by 5 feet (1524 mm) in dimension and shall not burn longer than 3 hours. The maximum size and duration of a bonfire shall not be increased by the fire

official unless it is determined that the fire safety requirements of the situation and the desirable duration of burn warrant the increase.

##### **307.4.1.2 Material**

Fuel for a bonfire shall consist only of seasoned dry firewood and shall be ignited with a small quantity of paper. The fire shall not be utilized for waste disposal purposes, and the fuel shall be chosen to minimize the generation of air contaminants.

#### **307.5 Attendance**

Open burning, bonfires, recreational fires and use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization.

## Forest Fire Laws of Title 13, Chapter 9

*New Jersey State Forest Fire Service declare that: "No person shall set fire to or cause to be set on fire in any manner whatsoever; or to start fires anywhere and permit them to spread to forests without first obtaining written permission by the department."*

### **Recreational Fires**

The "General Forest Fire Act" (N.J.S.A. 13:9 et. Al.) requires that before having any fire within a forested area, you must contact the nearest Forest Fire Service office to request a permit. You may also need a permit from the local fire official or NJ Division of Fire Safety.

Recreational Fire Permits may be issued as follows:

- **Event:** Ceremonial or non-residential event up to 2 days
- **Regular:** Residential use up to 30 days
- **Seasonal:** Approved recreation areas up to 90 days

Recreational permits are issued free of charge and should be requested at least 10 days in advance. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is required for processing.

No permits may be issued for a fire that is in violation of the State Air Pollution Code or conflicts with the State Fire Prevention Code.

Permits may be secured with the understanding that they give the holder no right to enter or use the property of another without the owner's permission.

Permits are not transferable, must be in possession of the person doing the burning and shown upon request. Firewardens may place any restrictions or special conditions on burning those local conditions may warrant.

### **Special Restrictions**

*The Department of Environmental Protection regulates open burning to limit the production of smoke in the interest of air quality, and to reduce the potential of wildfire devastating our natural resources and the surrounding communities.*

Firewardens can refuse to issue permits during any conditions that may make burning dangerous, or permits may be banned or rescinded entirely by the State Firewarden.

Additionally, "whenever, by reason of drought, the forests of the State are in danger of fires, the commissioner shall have the authority to forbid by proclamation from entering forests, in such parts of the State as the department deems the public interest requires" (Forest Fire Laws of Title 13, Chapter 9 New Jersey State Forest Fire Service).

The following recreational permit restrictions may take effect without prior notice:

- **Stage #1** —all fires directly on the ground in wooded areas will be prohibited.
- **Stage #2** —all fires in wooded area will be prohibited unless in an elevated prepared fireplace, elevated charcoal grill, or stove using electricity or a liquid or gas fuel.
- **Stage #3** —all fires in wooded areas will be prohibited unless using electricity or a liquid or gas fuel.

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**Prohibited**

*Under "Control and Prohibition of Open Burning"*

*N.J.A.C. 7:27—2.1 et seq.*

The disposal of rubbish, garbage, trade waste, buildings or structures by open burning (7:27-2.3A).

The disposal of fallen leaves by open burning (7:27-2.3B).

***Under New Jersey Forest Fire Law - N.J.S.A Title 13:9***

Setting fire to any forest, brush, grassland or tidal marsh without the written permission of a Forest Firewarden (13:9-19).

Having any fire by which property may be endangered without maintaining a careful and competent watch (13:9-20).

*In addition, all open burning must conform to the NJ Fire Prevention Code (N.J.A.C. 5:70-3. et seq.), enforced by the NJ Division of Fire Safety or local Fire Official.*

Violations may result in fines to \$5,000 and reimbursement of costs associated with extinguishing the fire!