
Local Code of Practice

Safety at Firework Displays

Section 39

(Version 3.00 – March 2019)

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

SCOPE:

This Local Code of Practice (LCoP) applies to:

- All managers including head teachers referred to as managers herein in LBB maintained schools.
- All employees of Barnet Borough Council.
- All contractors, agency staff, volunteers and temporary workers working on behalf of the Council
- All visitors to council premises (members of public, pupils etc.)

Issue Control

This Local Code of Practice is issued and managed by the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team.

Issue		Revision		
Number	Date	Number	Date	Amendments
Version 1	2003			
Version 2	Nov 2018			
Version 3	March 2019			
Review Schedule				
Review Conducted		Next Review Date		

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This LCoP should be read in conjunction with the London Borough of Barnet (LBB) Policies listed below in relation to LBB employees.

- Part C – Section 1 – Management of Health and Safety
- Part C – Section 12 – Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres (DSEAR)
- Part C – Section 16 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Part C – Section 11 – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

These can be found by clicking on this link <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/www/working-children-barnet/information-schools/health-and-safety-schools/health-and-safety>

Note, these policies are for the exclusive user of London Borough of Barnet employees only

Introduction

Public firework displays are becoming more popular because they encourage safety, but are only as safe as the organisers make them.

Organisers of public and semi-public displays should be aware of the requirements of the Health & safety at Work etc Act 1974, which applies not only to those directly involved but also to the safety of the members of public.

This Local Code of Practice contains basic guidance to organisers. Compliance with it is not necessarily sufficient to preclude every eventuality.

Before the display

Read the local code of practice. It contains basic rules on accident prevention: it is not exhaustive. Please contact the Safety, Health & Wellbeing (SHaW) Team if you require additional information.

Before agreeing to a display at your premises, ensure that:

- You notify the SHaW team
- Subject to all approvals, check that you are indemnified against civil liability.
- You set up a small organising committee with one member given full time responsibility for safety arrangements before, during and after the display. It is recommended that help or support is obtained from at least one person with experience of firework displays.
- Each member of the committee has clearly defined duties and has a copy of the local code of practice.

Space

An area of space, at least half the size of a football pitch should be designated for the display.

The display area should be sited so that spectators stand with their backs to the prevailing wind. An area roughly the same size as the display area at the back of the display site should be kept clear to act as a dropping zone for the spent fireworks. The area from which the fireworks are let off, must be kept clear during the display.

Barriers

Areas that are out of bounds, should be separated by strong and adequate barriers.

Site

Displays should be kept well clear of buildings, trees and hazards such as overhead electricity and telephone cables

Undergrowth or long grass should be cleared, prior to the display.

The site should be chosen to ensure prevailing winds will not blow smoke across roadways, especially fast moving roads such as motorways and A roads.

Access and Egress

The site chosen should have as many entrances and exits as possible, particularly if a large crowd is expected. Exit and entrances should be well lit, clearly marked and kept free from any obstructions.

Parking

If providing parking on site, consider the location of the parking area, to avoid damage caused by falling rockets. Ensure that vehicles are parked well away from the display area and if possible upwind. No parking should be allowed outside the allocated parking area.

Access to the parking should be clearly signposted and access to it should be separate from the pedestrian access to the site.

Rubbish Bins

Metal litter bins should be provided and arrangements made for them to be emptied, once the firework display has finished

Advance Precautions

Inform the emergency services:

Ensure that the fire brigade, police and first aid organisations are informed of the proposed display well in advance and maintain close contact with them throughout the preparation period of the event. Seek their advice that the planned arrangements are indeed adequate.

Fire Precautions:

Access to fire extinguisher and supplies of water and sand should be readily available. Fire appliances should be in good working order and stewards should receive training in their safe use.

First Aid:

First aid points should be established and manned by qualified personnel. First aid facilities should be clearly sign posted.

Storage of fireworks:

Fireworks will probably be delivered to the site in advance of the event. Advice should be sought from the local authority on correct storage. The storage of large quantities may require a licence.

The Display

Handling of the fireworks:

The number of people directly involved in handling the fireworks should be restricted, the fewer, the safer. If possible helpers, should have previous experience of firework displays. Each helper should be issued with a reasonably powerful torch

Smoking

No smoking should be permitted when handling the fireworks or at any time during the display. Fireworks should be unpacked carefully, away from open fires and flammable materials. The fireworks should be kept separate from their packaging and care taken to avoid tearing or breaking the fireworks as they are unpacked.

Containers:

Once removed from their packaging, the fireworks should be placed in a metal or wooden container which must be kept closed at all times. The instructions on each firework should be read carefully.

Lighting the fireworks

The fireworks should be lit at arm's length. All aerial fireworks, such as rockets must be angled away from spectators and roadways. They should never be fired over the heads of the spectators. Fireworks for re-loading must be kept in the container which must be kept closed after each firework has been taken out.

Portfire

The lighting of display fireworks is achieved by a device called a portfire, which is usually provided by the manufacturer. Only this should be used, these should not be carried in pockets but kept in a container.

Supporting fireworks

Tubing should be made of non-brittle plastics and be designed to withstand internal pressure. E.g. pipe made for water or gas supplies from high density polyethylene.

The tube used should have a diameter that will provide the required support to the firework without holding it too tightly. A snug tube may damage the firework when it is inserted and may increase the severity of a misfire.

Where any support is attached to a stake or frame, attach it on the side away from spectators so that should an explosion occur the effects will tend to be projected away from the spectators

Always position the fireworks as far as possible from spectators and at least at the manufacturers recommended minimum distance.

Never fix fire works directly into the ground or use objects such as bottles to support fireworks as this is highly dangerous.

Further guidance on minimum safety distances can be obtained in the HSE publication A guide to safety for firework display organisers and operators (**HSG 123**)

Further information on setting up large displays can be found on <http://www.firework-review.org.uk/rockets-safety/>

Misfires

If a firework fails to go off, under no circumstances should the person lighting the fireworks or anyone else return to re light it, as the firework may still be live and may go off unexpectedly.

Wind

Consideration should be given to a sudden change in wind direction, which may cause sparks and spent rockets to fall among spectators, or for smoke to blot out the display or affect nearby roads.

In very windy weather it might be better to postpone the display to another date.

Spectators

Crowd Control:

Good arrangements for the control of crowds are essential to a successful display.

Arrangements should be made well in advance for an adequate number of stewards to be responsible solely for the management of the spectators.

At least 2 stewards should be available for every 500 spectators. Stewards should be clearly identifiable by means of high visibility jackets/waistcoats and should be on constant watch for emergencies.

It is essential that stewards remain in control until the end of the display and to ensure that spectators cannot access areas out of bounds until the whole site has been made safe.

The stewards should not allow overcrowding, and in the event of any spectators breaking through into the display area, the display should be stopped immediately.

Personal Fireworks:

Spectators should be reminded not to bring their own fireworks to the display. Notices should be published and displayed in advance, and placed at all the site entrances.

Emergency Procedures:

A procedure for calling the Police, Fire or Ambulance services should be in place and fully briefed to all staff, including procedures to be followed if it should become necessary to clear the site.

A form of public address system should be organised to improve communication with the crowd.

Helpers should be aware of the location of the nearest telephone.

Bonfires

Bonfires can be a hazard and may detract from the firework display. If a bonfire is to be built, ensure that it is located well away from the display area. Under no circumstances should the bonfire be lit before the firework display, as sparks may stray into the display area. Spent fireworks must not be discarded onto the bonfire.

Lighting

One person should be given responsibility for the bonfire. Under no circumstances should flammable liquids such as paraffin or petrol be used to light the fire. The bonfire should not be constructed with dangerous rubbish such as foam based furniture, pressurised containers, tins of paint or bottles.

Before lighting the fire, the construction should be given one last check to ensure that it has not been occupied by children or animals.

After the display

Wearing leather gloves ensure that all the spent fireworks are carefully collected up, using tongs or a similar implement. If any have failed to go off, douse them in a bucket of water.

Any aerial shells should be doused prior to disposal.

Litter bins should be emptied and checks made to ensure that the bonfire has been completely extinguished before helpers/stewards leave the site.

Further Information & Guidance

Further advice and guidance is available from the CSG Safety, Health and Wellbeing team (SHaW), the SHaW team or on the council's intranet; and their page contains health and safety guidance and policies and risk assessment forms.

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[The Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) website contains a lot of useful general and topic-specific health and safety guidance, much of which can be downloaded free. HSE priced publications are available from HSE Books (Tel: 0178 881165), or any good bookshop.

Firework Display : Safety Checklist

Before the display check the following;

Observation	Action Taken
Have you notified SHaW?	
Have you obtained approval from the head of service to hold the event on council premises?	
Has a lead person been nominated to take control of the event?	
Has a competent person been identified to take charge of safety?	
Has a competent person been identified to take charge of lighting fireworks	
Have you informed the Fire Brigade?	
Have you arranged attendance by a first aid organisation?	
Have you prepared emergency procedures and briefed to all staff/helpers/stewards?	
If required, will emergency services be able to locate the venue?	
Have you allocated sufficient space (minimum 55m x 45m) within which the display will take place?	
Will spectators be kept at least 30m away from fireworks/display area with the area clearly defined by rope/barriers?	
Are fire extinguishers, buckets of water, sand and metal litter bins available for use and in place as required?	
Have suitable numbers of stewards been identified? Are they easily identifiable?	
Are entrances and exits clearly marked and kept clear from obstruction?	
Are stewards fully briefed in emergency procedures? Are they trained in the safe use of fire extinguishers?	
Are those who will be lighting fireworks given an opportunity to read instructions in advance and given a copy of the Local Code of Practice (LCoP 13)	
Is a bonfire sited well away from the display area and fenced off for the safety of spectators?	
Are fireworks securely stored in a metal or strong wooden box	
Have visitors/spectators been advised not to bring their own fireworks? Are notices displayed to remind visitors/spectators as a reminder?	