



FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

RE: SKY LANTERNS AND LUMINARIA USE

INTRODUCTION:

This document contains the requirements of Los Alamos Fire Department (LAFD) Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) for sky lantern's and luminaria use at one- and two-family dwellings, and commercial businesses within the County. Open flame, per fire code can be regulated much like uses for recreational fires and outdoor fireplaces. [See Fire Marshal's Office, *Informational Bulletin* Re: Recreational Fires and Portable Outdoor Fireplaces.] Los Alamos County is considered as either a wildland urban interface or intermix areas and this adds to elements of fire safety that other communities may not experience. Other entities (EPA, Health Departments, Homeowners' Associations, etc.) may have additional requirements which are not included in this document.

The use of sky lanterns within the County is prohibited per fire code. Sky lanterns can easily cause the unintentional spread of fire to structures, forests and open areas and a person can be held liable. The design of a sky lantern utilizes hot gas from the flame to rise, and as a result, flameless alternatives do not exist.

Luminarias may be utilized following general recommended fire safety guidelines. The party utilizing luminaria's is responsible for confirmation that their activity is not in conflict with any requirements or restrictions by other entities. **It is recommended to choose a flameless alternative lighting system such as pre-manufactured luminaria string light set, or a battery-operated tea light for optimum fire safety.**

DEFINITIONS

Sky Lantern: any untethered, unmanned free-floating device containing an open flame or other heat source.



Luminaria: a traditional Mexican Christmas lantern originally consisting of a candle set in sand inside a paper bag. (*Merriam-Webster*).





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LUMINARIA LOCATION:

Luminaria's if using a flame from a tealight, or a small candle, do not have a required minimum clearance from structures and combustible materials, but are **recommended** to be operated at least 15' away from these things. Luminaria's must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions at all times.

BURN RESTRICTIONS AND PERMITS

Our goal at LAFD-FMO is to allow the use of luminaria's while ensuring the safety of you, your neighbors, and our firefighters. For that reason, **luminarias may not be utilized during the following times:**

1. When there is a "Red Flag Warning" issued by the National Weather Service.
2. When the Fire Weather Outlook for the day is "Elevated, Critical, or Extreme"
3. When there is an open burning or staged fire restriction issued by a Fire Marshal.
4. During periods of sustained or gusty winds that make the activity unsafe, i.e. if sparks, smoke or occasional emitting ember are flowing horizontal or sideways with wind direction, this condition is unsafe.

The Fire Marshal's Office does not issue permits, nor conduct regular site inspections for luminaria's but does require compliance with all regulations in this document (*note that clearances for luminaria's use is **recommended**, but **not required***). **A courtesy site inspection can be requested by the homeowner.**

FIRE DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION

If the fire extends beyond the area where you intended, call 911 IMMEDIATELY and report it!

ATTENDANCE

Luminaria's use shall be attended by an adult (18 years old, minimum) who has access to a telephone / cellphone to notify the fire department if a problem develops. Attendance shall be constant and shall continue until the fire is completely extinguished. Means of extinguishing the fire shall always be present and shall include at least one of the following:

- A portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 5 lb. capacity and rated for class A hazards.
- A garden hose with a spray nozzle and the valve opened.
- A 5-gallon bucket of water or sand (with shovel) to smother the fire.