



POSITION STATEMENT

Sky Lanterns

Adopted September 09, 2015



The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs (MAFC) through its Fire and Life Safety Section (FLSS) in conjunction with the Michigan Fire Inspector's Society (MFIS) is adopting the position that the sale and use of Sky Lanterns should be banned in the State of Michigan. This position is being taken so Fire Chiefs and other fire safety professionals can better respond to inquiries about the use of sky lanterns.

Sky lanterns, also known as Kongming lanterns or Chinese lanterns, are small hot air balloons made of paper with an opening at the bottom where a small fire is suspended. Per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sky lanterns have become increasingly popular, however they pose a serious fire hazard. For this reason their use is prohibited by both NFPA 1: Fire Code and the International Fire Code (IFC). Although thought to be in the same category as consumer grade fireworks that were recently made legal in Michigan, sky lanterns do not meet the definition of fireworks based on the definition in the Michigan Fireworks Safety Act, Public Act 256 of 2011.

Sky lanterns are generally made of oiled rice paper with a bamboo frame, all of which are easily ignitable. Once lit and airborne, sky lanterns can travel over a mile in distance. Both NFPA and IFC include language that bans the use of these devices through the requirement that any open burning be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. Through the nature of a sky lantern being an open flame floating in the sky to an unknown destination, this requirement is unattainable when sky lanterns are lit and released.

The MAFC and MFIS encourages the fire service leaders in the State of Michigan to be firm in their opposition to the sale and use of sky lanterns. The safety of our citizens should not be sacrificed and preventable loss of property or life should not be dismissed based on the perceived safety of sky lanterns. The fire service within this great state should be actively engaged in the effort to educate our citizens and legislators so that they can fully comprehend the implications that can result in the use of sky lanterns and how they could impact the safety of the public in our communities.

For more information, contact:

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