



OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Environmental Health & Safety
505 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430
TEL: (201) 684-6252 EMAIL: firecom@ramapo.edu
www.ramapo.edu/ehs/fire-safety

Chaffing Dish Fuel Policy

Purpose

Sets forth procedures for chafing dish fuel use on college property.

To Whom Does the Policy Apply

Ramapo College community

Related Documents

- New Jersey Uniform Fire Code
- <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. 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

Chafing dish fuel or "canned heat" (commonly known by the **Sterno** brand) is a type of fuel made from denatured and jellied alcohol. It is designed to be burned directly from its can. Its primary uses are in the food service industry for buffet heating and in the home for fondue and as a chafing fuel for heating chafing dishes.

This policy applies equally to similar products under different brand names.

Procedure

Chafing dish fuel is permitted only in locations fully protected by automatic fire sprinkler systems. Electrical food warming devices are the preferred products to use in all areas instead of chafing dish fuel; particularly in areas that are not protected by fire sprinkler systems. If the electrical food warming products are not available, then chafing dish fuel may be permitted with approval from the Fire Marshal.

Sterno SAFE HEAT Wick Chaffing Fuel or similar type wick product shall be the only approved style of chafing fuel. Open top gel fuel products are not permitted.



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General Safety Procedures:

- The use of chafing dish fuel is limited to buffet heating and as a fuel for heating chafing dishes.
- Chafing dish fuel is prohibited in any building that has a fire protection system impairment in place or that is on a Fire Watch. Contact the College Fire Marshal or Public Safety to confirm.
- **DO NOT PUT FOOD TRAYS DIRECTLY OVER CHAFING DISH FUEL CANS!** Ensure that food trays are placed over trays containing the appropriate amount of water.
- Users are responsible for adherence to this Policy during their respective event; and shall ensure that the chafing dish fuel use is supervised by a College staff member at all times.
- The staff shall be aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguisher and manual fire alarm pull station and know how to activate the fire alarm in the event of a fire emergency.
- Chafing dish fuel shall only be utilized on tables with coverings that are flame resistant. In the absence of table coverings all chafing dishes or beverage urns using chafing dish fuel shall be placed on non-combustible mats or trays to prevent accidental contact with any combustible decorative materials.
- Flammable items such as napkins, paper and plastic cups, plastic table wares, or other decorations should be separated by a minimum of three feet from chafing dish fuel; it is strongly recommended that flammable items be placed on a table separate from the chafing dish fuel.
- Partially used chafing dish fuel shall not be returned to storage until it is completely cooled down and safe for storage.
- The use of chafing dish fuel may be subject to limitations should the use and set up of the room increase concerns for the safety of the occupants.
- All safety tips provided by the manufacturer of Sterno shall be strictly followed whenever chafing dish fuel is used. A copy of the SAFETY TIPS is attached.



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CHAFING FUEL SAFETY TIPS

ALWAYS		ALWAYS use CAUTION when handling OPEN FLAME products	
		ALWAYS use a blunt object, such as a spoon, to pry off the lid	
		ALWAYS cup hand over lid when opening can	
		ALWAYS remove excess gel from lid if it is being used as a regulator	
		ALWAYS wash fuel residue from hands	
		ALWAYS place the can underneath the chafing dish or beverage urn before lighting	
		ALWAYS make sure cans are placed securely in equipment	
		ALWAYS use a long handled match or butane lighter to light cans	
		ALWAYS use a can cap, snuffer paddle, regulator or saucer to extinguish flame	
		ALWAYS wait until can is cool before touching	
NEVER		NEVER use a sharp knife to pry off lid	
		NEVER use a lit can to light another can	
		NEVER carry lit cans	
		NEVER carry chafing dishes or beverage urns with lit cans	
		NEVER touch cans while still hot	
		NEVER allow decor, loose clothing, napkins or tablecloths near flame	
		NEVER allow hair to fall near flame	
		NEVER use hands to extinguish flame	
		NEVER blow out flame of Gel or Hot Spot® to extinguish	



View a short chafing fuel training video



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