

**Solid Alcohol (Sterno)
Fuel Use Guidelines**

**Procedure: 4.20
Version: 1.01**

**Created: 02/16/2009
Revised:**

A. Purpose

This policy establishes safe operating guidelines for use of Solid Alcohol Fuel (Sterno) on Columbia University premises. This Policy recognizes the requirements of FDNY Code (FC Sec. 308) and the need of a permit for use of Open Flames in any Public Assembly Area.

B. Applicability/scope

These guidelines are intended to provide precautions to take to prevent the ignition of combustible material and ensure the safety of all occupants which might result from misuse of such solid fuel (sterno). These guidelines are for all Columbia University personnel as well as all outside contractors and visitors who handle or use solid fuel (sterno) on Columbia University property.

C. Definitions

Solid Fuel (Sterno) – cans of denatured and jellied alcohol fuel used for the purposes of warming food.

D. Procedures

1. Solid alcohol (Sterno) heating of food is permitted provided that the following precautions are taken to prevent ignition of combustible material and ensures the safety of occupants.
2. Sterno use is permitted in public space, (i.e. Public Assembly Space, meeting rooms, etc.) only, it is not permitted in private office space, amphitheatres, sleeping areas, or other non-public space. Where a Public Assembly Permits has been issued, the space must also have a current Open Flame Permit, issued by the New York City Fire Department.
3. Outside food vendors shall be allowed to utilize sterno heating devices, providing they comply with the Solid Alcohol (Sterno) Fuel Use Guidelines of Columbia University. Vendors shall be provided a copy of this policy and upon request shall provide written certification that their employees are properly trained in the lighting and handling of sterno as well as the knowledge of how to operate a fire extinguisher.
4. Sterno fuel use shall be attended at all times by a member of the catering staff who has been trained in sterno use and fire safety. If a non-catered event, an organizer must be designated as a "Firewatch" to ensure this policy is being complied with.
5. A 10 pound ABC dry chemical extinguisher, or Type K extinguisher, shall be available within ten (10) feet of the serving table or tables.
6. Use of secondary containers for sterno, i.e. fuel holders with cover, is mandatory. Proper tools must be available for the smothering of the flame if needed, i.e. snuffer paddle.
7. All chafing racks and beverage urns using sterno shall be placed on non-combustible mats, ceramic or metal trays extending at least eight inches beyond the sterno container in each direction, to prevent accidental contact with any combustible materials.

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8. Sterno shall be placed under food or beverage tray before lighting. Sterno shall only be lit by means of a butane lighter or long handled match. Chafing racks or beverage urns shall not be moved while sterno are lit.
9. Only regular cloth table covers shall be used, paper or plastic table coverings are not permitted. Table decorations must be flame resistant. Combustible material such as plates, napkins, plastic utensils, cups and similar products shall be separated by a minimum of three feet from sterno.
10. Sterno must be immediately extinguished when the food tray is empty or no longer used. When the event is over, all sterno must be extinguished, immediately capped and removed from facility.
11. The Fire Safety staff of the appropriate facility shall be notified of all sterno usage within their respective buildings.
12. In the event of a fire, Columbia University Fire Safety Policy shall be followed. Public Safety shall be immediately notified.

E. Responsibilities

Supervisor of event is responsible for notification to Fire Safety of events where solid alcohol fuel (sterno) will be used and the assignment of the “Firewatch” personnel who is knowledgeable in sterno use and trained in fire safety including fire extinguisher use. EH&S Fire Safety is responsible, once notified of the use of Solid Fuel, to inspect the area where sterno will be used and to review this policy with Supervisor of event.

F. Emergency contacts

In the event of a fire, follow Columbia University Fire Safety Policy by pulling fire alarm and calling Public Safety and 911.
Morningside – 212-854-5555
Medical Center – 212-305-7979

G. Cross References like URL, Forms, web addresses, etc. - N/A

H. Medical Surveillance - N/A

I. Recordkeeping - N/A

J. Appendices - N/A

K. Forms - N/A

L. References -N/A

M. Acknowledgements (optional) - N/A