



Scouts Australia NSW

46. Fire Activities

Preamble

Beyond the normal section program, Venturer Scouts and Rover Scouts are encouraged to explore new skills to further their personal development. This policy recognises the availability of controlled fire activities to members in the Venturer Scout and Rover Scout sections and to adult leaders.

Importantly, “Fire Ball Hockey”, “Flaming Football” and similar activities involving the use of “fire balls” are defined as prohibited activities in the NSW Organisation and Information Handbook and must not be played by *Scouts* in NSW at any time.

46.1 Policy

The Chief Executive, The Chief Commissioner and The Chairman of the Scoutsafe Committee have committed to embrace Work Health and Safety as the major priority in all activities undertaken by the Members and employed staff of Scouts NSW. This policy and procedure embraces all aspects of Performance Arts undertaken by youth members and specifically includes Fire Performance Activities.

The following skills are permitted and are covered by this policy:

Prop Manipulation

including juggling fire balls, poi twirling, staff twirling, fire whips, fire swords, fire snakes, fire fans

The following skills are not currently permitted within Scouts Australia NSW Branch:

Fire Tracing, Fire Eating, Fire Breathing

NB. Nothing in this policy restricts any participants from engaging in similar circus-style skills using non-flammable equipment (e.g. juggling clubs, LED glow poi, hula hoops, etc).

46.2 Procedure

46.2.1 Fire activities are reserved for registered and financial members of Scouts Australia that are currently invested in the Venturer Scout section or above. Prior to engaging in any fire activity, participants under the age of 18 years must ensure they are carrying a copy of approval from their parent/guardian on form HS-46.1 Fire Activities Parent Informed Consent Form.

46.2.2 At least one adult member that has completed a safety induction day as certified by Scouts Australia NSW Branch and who holds membership of the Australian Circus and Physical Theatre Association (ACAPTA) must be in attendance at every activity. This person will be responsible for ensuring compliance with all requirements as detailed in this policy.

46.2.3 At least one Leader with a current Certificate of Adult Leadership (COAL), must be in attendance at every activity. This Leader is responsible for the 'non-activity' elements of this activity, particularly in relation to under 18 members. This allows the adult member responsible to focus on the compliance & activity issues.

46.2.4 Approval must be sought from the property owner, Group Leader or Camp Warden, prior to commencing any fire activity at the nominated location.

46.2.5 Consideration should be given to the current fire danger, and all fire activities postponed whenever Extreme or Catastrophic Fire Danger is reported. The wind, slope and orientation of the activity space should also be considered and the activity modified if required according to the location.

46.2.6 There are many inherent hazards when using fire in Scout activities. These hazards include equipment failure, igniting ground cover, burns to clothing and skin, and accidental ignition of fuel supply, as well as the inhalation or ingestion of fuel. The Participant Group must provide risk assessments for each phase of the activity, starting with the audition process and ending with show performances. This includes detailed risk assessments of each training and performance location and must include site inspections of any new performance space prior to performances taking place. Training Risk Assessments are to be submitted to the Scoutsafe Committee for review in January of each calendar year.

46.2.7 Any *Scout* participating in such fire activities must be fully aware of these hazards and of the precautions and controls listed below for the respective skills. Participants under the age of 18 years must ensure that their parents/guardians are also made aware of these hazards and return a signed HS-46.1 Fire Activities parent Informed Consent Form.

46.2.8 Definitions

Novice Participant a member under the age of 18 years that has received parent/guardian approval on the required form (or a member over the age of 18 years) and who has limited or nil experience at fire activities

Participant a member under the age of 18 years that has received parent/guardian approval on the required form (or a member over the age of 18 years) and who has experience at fire activities and has demonstrated an ability to adhere to this policy

Register Performers and Assessors who have been certified to participate in Fire Activities will have their assessed skills noted on the Scouts NSW Membership Database in the following categories:

a.) Performers in NSW who have been peer assessed in the safety aspects of fire performance and assessed as having the minimum skill requirements to begin fire prop manipulation. **FP** and **FSA** level registration is noted on the Scouts NSW Membership System.

b.) Adult leaders who have been assessed by ACAPTA as peer assessors, who have not been assessed for minimum skill requirements to begin fire prop manipulation. **FSA** level registration is noted on the Scouts NSW Membership System. Members with only **FSA** assessment

are not permitted to perform with fire, unless further skill based assessment has been undertaken.

Safety spotter a participant that refrains from using fire to strictly observe the involvement of other participants

Spectator a person that is not trained in fire activities and/or a person that is not a registered and financial member of Scouts Australia; or a member not currently invested in the Venturer Scout section or above; or a member under the age of 18 years that has not received parent/guardian approval on the required form.

46.2.9 Training and Peer Assessment

Novice participants must only engage in fire activities after first demonstrating competent skills using circus-style non-flammable equipment. Achieving this standard may require many weeks and months of regular practice before participants are deemed to be competent to perform with fire.

All participants must be assessed as competent for the respective skills prior to being involved in any fire activities by an adult member that has completed a safety induction day, has been assessed as **FSA** as certified by Scouts Australia NSW Branch and holds membership of the Australian Circus and Physical Theatre Association (ACAPTA).

Novice participants using fire must be under the direct supervision of an experienced performer who is already competent at the specified skill.

Training using fire must be conducted away from all spectators.

The dates of all training must be recorded on the HS-46.2 Fire Activity Log Form.

A full performance routine must be rehearsed at training prior to requesting performance approval from the Region Commissioner or their representative.

Constant and ongoing assessment of participant skills prior to a performance should be completed ensuring that any performance is well within the ability of the participant. (Participants should never perform beyond 80% of their demonstrated ability.)

An Activity Notification Form – A1 must be completed for this activity. In the event of regular training sessions being scheduled throughout the year, a single A1 may be used on the proviso that the form lists every training date for the year. An A1 form must be created and lodged with the appropriate Commissioner for every performance date, two weeks prior to the Performance taking place. In the event of additional training sessions for a specific performance being scheduled, a new A1 must be created and lodged with the appropriate Commissioner to cover these additional practice sessions.

46.2.10 Fuel

Only combustible fuels with a flash point above 65 degrees centigrade are considered appropriate for Fire Activities. Flammable liquids such as Petrol and Diesel are dangerous

goods and are not appropriate for Fire Activities and must never be used under any circumstances.

The following combustible fuels are considered most suitable for Fire Activities:

Firewater
Pure Kerosene
Jet A Fuel

The use of Household Kerosene is not optimal, but may be used if the other fuels are not readily available.

46.2.11 Common Precautions

There are several precautions that are mandatory for all fire activities as included below.

1. Fire retardant cotton clothing is to be worn by all participants.
2. Participants are required to wear shoes at all times.
3. Participants are not permitted to wear singlet tops, or to go bare chested when engaging in Fire Activities.
4. The Fuel used for training and performance must be combustible, not flammable.
5. Fuel supply is to be stored in suitable sealed containers and isolated from the activity area.
6. Fuel supply is to be handled by participants only.
7. A dedicated safety spotter(s) must be nominated and available at all times during the activity to provide emergency assistance if required.
8. Extinguishing equipment must be on standby, including dense wet cotton material, fire blanket(s) wet sand and either CO2 or powder ABE extinguisher(s).
9. A first aid kit must be available and at least one person qualified in Apply First Aid (HLTFA301B) must be in attendance.

Participants must demonstrate that they are not fatigued or otherwise impaired from participating safely prior to engaging in fire activities.

46.2.12 Prop Manipulation

including juggling fire balls, poi twirling, staff twirling, fire whips, fire swords, fire snakes and fire fans

1. Mandatory use of Personal Protective Equipment including shoes, cotton clothing and fire proof safety gloves where necessary.
2. Inspect and tighten all equipment prior to use.
3. Check all equipment for damage or wear and tear prior to use, replacing damaged parts where necessary.
4. Warm up with practice equipment prior to activity.
5. Participants must fuel equipment individually in a dedicated area away from the main activity space.
6. All equipment should be shaken out after fuelling to remove excess liquid.
7. A separate area must be set aside for hot used equipment to avoid risk of burns or trip hazards.

46.2.13 Performance Displays

Performance displays may be conducted safely when the following additional precautions are taken.

1. All performances must have prior approval of the Region Commissioner or their representative
2. All performances must be recorded on the activity log included in this policy
3. The activity organiser must ensure that the formal Scoutsafe performance risk assessment is updated for the location in use
4. Only skilled participants are permitted when spectators are present
5. Participants must be inducted to the performance space prior to any performance
6. A defined exclusion zone for spectators and other participants not directly involved in the performance must be established using rope (or similar) laid out on the ground surrounding the activity space
7. The safety spotter is responsible for maintaining the exclusion zone (with assistance if required for larger audiences)
8. An announcer will be appointed for each performance to introduce each act and to provide the following verbal warnings:
 - a. that spectators must not touch any of the performance equipment
 - b. that these are skilled performers and that members of the audience should not try to repeat these skills at home
 - c. that children should not play with fire or matches unsupervised

46.2.12 Incident Reporting

In accordance with Scouts NSW Policy and Procedure, all incidents, accidents and near misses are to be reported using HS-5.1 Incident/Accident/Near Miss Form to the NSW State Office WHS Officer within 48 hours of the incident.

46.3 Records | References

- Fire Activities Parent Informed Consent Form HS-46.1, Fire Performance Log HS-46.2, Fire Skills Assessment Notification HS-46.3
- Hazard and incident reports HS-5, HS-5.1
- JSA/Risk Assessment reports HS-8.2
- Specific types of risk assessments e.g. Hazardous Substances and Site Specific Performance Space Risk assessment
- Risk Register HS-5.4, HS- 5.5
- Fire Performance Group Tool Box meeting minutes to review controls.
- HS-8.3 Safety Improvement Action Plan
- WHS Code of Practice, Risk Management
- Scouts Australia National Risk Management Program