



# 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 fire juggling balls, fire poi twirling, fire staff twirling, fire whips, fire pseudo weapons (eg. fire swords), fire snakes, fire fans, fire hoops, fire clubs,*

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

Fire Tracing, Fire Eating, Fire Breathing and Fire Skipping Rope.

*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 to hold a Fire Safety Assessor (FSA) qualification 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), other than the adult member specified in 46.2.2, 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 assessed by ACAPTA as peer assessors in the safety aspects of fire performance and peer 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.) Performers in NSW who have been assessed in the safety aspects of fire performance and assessed as having the minimum skill

requirements to begin fire prop manipulation, who have not been assessed by ACAPTA as peer assessors. FP level registration is noted on the Scouts NSW Membership System.

c.) 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 with unlit props 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 a performer who is already competent at the specified skill and who holds both of the Scouts NSW qualifications of FSA and FP. 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.

Members who wish to be assessed in Fire Performance must follow this process:

1. Scouts NSW Members who are registered in the Venturer Scout or Rover Scout Sections or as Leaders or Trainee Leaders, who wish to perform with fire must apply for a Peer Assessment on HS-46.4 Application for Peer Assessment Fire Performance.
2. Scouts NSW Members who are registered in the Venturer Scout or Rover Scout Sections or as Leaders or Trainee Leaders, must provide a log of fire performance experience on HS-46.2 Fire Activities Log as an attachment to the application.
3. Scouts NSW Members who are Venturers, Rovers or Leaders and classed as Novice Participants, who have not previously been assessed to perform with fire, but who are ready to be assessed, will also follow the same process. Novices must attach a log of all unlit training sessions used in preparation for fire performance assessment.
4. All members applying for Peer Assessment will be required to answer questions based on Chapter 46. Scouts NSW WHS Manual policy, safety requirements, risk assessments and safe performance processes.
5. Assessment Days will be programmed in advance and advised to Scouting Members through Region Commissioners. An A1 will be provided for the assessment day, indicating the location, date and time. Participants will be inducted into the assessment space by the assessors on the day. All Fire Props must be submitted for inspection prior to performance. Equipment that is damaged or badly worn will be deemed to be unfit for use and must not be used until the required maintenance action is effected or the equipment replaced. Suitable fuel will be provided for the assessment task by the Assessors. There may be a small charge for fuel. This will be notified on the A1 for the Assessment Day.
6. Three recognised assessors, who must include one Fire Skills Assessor, who is not a Fire Performer, but who holds a Certificate of Adult Leadership, will complete the details for each of the Qualifiers, sign the Certification, and send the completed form to the State Commissioner (Performing Arts) who will authorise it and send to the State Office for data entry to the Member's Skills Record. Expiry Dates must be included and any existing qualification certificates must be sighted before completing this form.
7. The Activity/Skill areas and Qualifying Levels awarded are defined in NSW State Policies and are only recognised or awarded through Scouting, and are the only ones recognised by the Scouts NSW at this time.
8. All qualifications are valid for 3 years and Members must be verified for currency of skills upon expiry. Only current qualifications will be recognised and recorded. Expired qualifications will be periodically removed from State computer records.

#### **46.2.10 Fuel**

Only fuels with a flash point of 40 degrees centigrade or above are considered appropriate for Fire Activities. It is preferred that combustible fuels with a flash point above 60 degrees centigrade are used where possible as these are not considered dangerous goods for transport in Australia. Flammable liquids that have a flash point below 40 degrees centigrade such as Petrol are not appropriate for Fire Activities and must never be used under any circumstances.

The following fuels are considered most suitable for Fire Activities, in order:

Refined Kerosene with a very low aromatic content such as:

Firewater

Firesol (a.k.a. Solvent 3440)

Firelight (a.k.a. Isopar G)

Unscented lamp oil/Low odour paraffin

White Spirit 3

Jet A-1

**The use of Household Kerosene is not permitted under any circumstances.**

A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) with Australian contact details must be available for all fuels used during Fire Activities and be kept with the fuel during storage, transport and performance.

#### **46.2.11 Common Precautions**

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

1. Fire retardant cotton clothing (e.g. heavy duty cotton/denim) 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. An Australian SDS must be kept with any fuels used
8. A dedicated safety spotter(s) must be nominated and available at all times during the activity to provide emergency assistance if required.
9. Extinguishing equipment must be on standby, including dense wet cotton material, fire blanket(s) wet sand and either CO2 or powder ABE extinguisher(s).
10. 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 fire juggling balls, poi twirling, staff twirling, fire whips, fire pseudo weapons (e.g. swords), fire snakes, fire fans, fire hoops, fire clubs*

1. Mandatory use of Personal Protective Equipment including shoes, fire-retardant 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 blotted and then shaken out if necessary after refuelling to remove excess fuel.
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) 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 I References**

- Fire Activities Parent Informed Consent Form HS-46.1, Fire Performance Log HS-46.2, Fire Skills Assessment Notification HS-46.3, HS-46.4 Application for Peer Assessment Fire Performance; HS-46.5 Fire Session Safety Checklist
- Hazard and incident reports HS-5, HS-5.1
- Record of Tool Box Talks/Communication Meetings HS-4.2
- Work Site Risk Register HS-5.4
- JSA/Risk Assessment reports HS-8.2
- Safety Improvement/Action Plan HS-8.3
- HS-9.1 Site Emergency Contact List
- HS9.2 Fire Evacuation Procedure
- HS-9.3 Site Emergency Response Personnel Responsibilities
- HS-9.4 Site Emergency Response Plan Training and Evacuation Drill
- HS 12.1 Annual First Aid Facilities Assessment
- HS12.3 First Aid Checklist
- HS12.4 First Aid Report (Minor/Bandaids incidents)

- 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
- HS-33.1 SDS Register
- HS-40.1 Working Bee Planner
- HS-14.1 FPA First Day Worker Site Safety Induction Checklist Circus/Fire Performance Activity
- HS14.2 Site Annual Safety Training Plan
- HS14.3 WHS Training Record for onsite equipment and/or processes
- HS22.1 Safety Signage Assessment
- HS30.2 Plant Maintenance Schedule
- HS-35 SOP
- WHS Code of Practice, Risk Management
- Scouts Australia National Risk Management Program