



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subject:** Sky Lanterns, Chinese Lanterns, Luminaries

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Irvine, CA – Lighting Sky Lanterns seems to be an idyllic and increasingly popular way to mark various occasions, from capping off wedding receptions to remembering loved ones at memorial services. The luminaries, which are also called Chinese Lanterns, operate much like hot air balloons. Each lantern is made out of a paper shell wrapped around a thin wire frame and contains a candle or fuel cell. The lanterns are typically constructed from oiled rice paper on a bamboo frame. When lit, the flame heats the air inside the lantern, causing it to rise uncontrollably into the air. They have been known to travel significant distances because the candles or fuel cells can burn for several minutes.

The problem is that eventually the lanterns decrease in altitude and can land on dry vegetation, rooftops, power lines, trees, or structures before they are fully extinguished. Sky Lanterns can easily start fires which can turn into tragic events.

Orange County Fire Authority has determined that Sky Lanterns meet the definition of recreational fires as defined in Section 302.1 of the California Fire Code. Consequently, these devices require constant attendance as required in Section 307.5 of the California Fire Code.

§302.1 RECREATIONAL FIRE: An outdoor fire with burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (914 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

§307.5 RECREATIONAL FIRE ATTENDANCE: Open burning, bonfires, recreational fires and use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished.

**OCFA prohibits** the use of Sky Lanterns without a permit. To obtain a permit, contact Tony Aleman, Fire Prevention Specialist, at (714) 573-6121 or [tonyaleman@ocfa.org](mailto:tonyaleman@ocfa.org). One condition of the permit is the Sky Lanterns must be tethered or anchored so they can be continually attended until extinguished. Persons who use Sky Lanterns with a resulting fire may be held financially liable for all fire suppression costs in addition to property damage or medical costs from injuries resulting from the fire.

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