



City of Bothell Fire and E.M.S.
Community Risk Reduction
18415 - 101ST Ave NE
Bothell, WA 98011
(425) 806-6250



Sky Lanterns

Sky Lantern: A sky lantern, also known as an aerial luminaire, is a miniature, unmanned hot air balloon that relies on an open flame to heat the air inside the lantern with the intention of causing it to lift into the atmosphere. Typically made of rice paper or flame resistant paper, it has a fuel cell in the opening. The fuel cell is normally a piece of wax paper, waxy cardboard or a wax ring attached to the lantern by flame resistant string, bamboo sticks or metal wires.

Once lit, the sky lantern can be airborne for 10 to 15 minutes before the fuel cell is exhausted and it floats back to the ground. Being constructed of lightweight materials the sky lantern can achieve an altitude of 1,500 feet or more and have an unpredictable flight path, going wherever the wind takes it, making it possible to travel several miles before landing.

Questions: Are Sky Lanterns allowed?

Answer: The International Fire Code Section 305.1 states:

Clearance between ignition sources, such as luminaires, heaters, flame-producing devices and combustible materials, shall be maintained in an approved manner.

Due to an unpredictable flight path, a sky lantern cannot be controlled once released. Sky lanterns are not allowed. Releasing a sky lantern into the atmosphere could result in a criminal charge of “reckless burning” if a fire was ignited.