I. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to define policies and procedures that will ensure compliance with safety requirements whenever events are planned on the Brown University campus and in Brown-owned properties beyond the campus.

II. Scope

Whenever an event is planned on the Brown University campus or in a property owned or managed by the University, the individual sponsor or a representative of the sponsoring organization must review this policy prior to the event and assure compliance with the specified procedures before and during the event.

III. Application

This policy applies to individuals and the representatives of organizations who sponsor events that take place on the University campus or inside any building owned or managed by the University.

IV. General Requirements:

The following procedures are established to assure compliance with the Rhode Island Fire Code as well as Brown University fire regulations and safety policies. The event sponsor is responsible for complying with the following general requirements:

**Be Familiar with the University’s Emergency Action Plan**

Every employee, including part time and summer help, should be familiar with the University’s Emergency Action Plan. Important safety information and emergency procedures are detailed in this document. The Emergency Action Plan is available on-line at the Brown University Office of Environmental Health and Safety web site: [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/)

**Obtain the Event Safety Checklist**

Event Sponsors shall obtain and use a copy of the Event Safety Checklist. The form is available from the EHS – Fire Safety website: [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/restricted/checklist_events.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/restricted/checklist_events.pdf)

**Appoint an Event Manager**

Appoint a person from your organization who will serve as the Event Manager. The Event Manager is responsible for complying with all applicable requirements specified in the Event Safety Checklist. The Event Manager shall be present prior to the start of the event and throughout the duration of the event to assure compliance with all specified rules and procedures.

**Choose an Appropriate Space**

Determine the occupancy capacity of the space you plan to reserve for your event. The space must be large enough to accommodate the expected number of attendees. The listed occupancy capacity assumes no furnishings in the room. The use of chairs, tables, bars, stages, etc. will reduce the capacity.
of the space. Contact the Fire Safety Officer at (401) 863-3462 to determine occupancy limits of a space when you plan to add stages, tables and other furnishings to the space. Refer to Appendix B of this document to see a list of available assembly spaces on campus.

**Occupancy Capacity Calculations:**

Occupancy capacities have been calculated by Fire Safety personnel from the Brown University Office of Environmental Health and Safety in cooperation with the Providence Fire Prevention Office, using the provisions of the Rhode Island Life Safety Code.

The Life Safety Code provides clear standards for determining the maximum number of persons who can safely occupy a particular assembly space. The standards consider not just the size of the room, but also the number and location of exits, the size and distribution of egress paths (aisles and corridors), and the installation of fire safety equipment including sprinklers, fire extinguishers, exit signs, early warning fire alarms and emergency lighting. Overcrowding can result in injury and even death if occupants of a space need to evacuate quickly.

Event sponsors are responsible for enforcing the occupancy limits in a space when they host an event in a Brown-owned building.

**Using the Spreadsheet (Appendix B)**

Many of the assembly spaces on the Brown campus can be configured in multiple ways, based on the needs of the group using the space. For that reason, some spaces may have multiple occupancy capacities, based on the use. In Appendix “B” we have provided a spreadsheet listing the most commonly used assembly spaces on campus and their occupancy capacities. When applicable, we have listed multiple occupancy capacities for various common room set-ups:

- Seated/Classroom
- Sit-down dinner
- Buffet Dinner
- Cocktail Party
- Dance

**Setting Up Tables and Chairs – Aisle Requirements**

Floor plan layouts have been developed for most of the larger assembly spaces on campus. These plans meet all the fire code requirements for table and chair spacing, aisle width and egress access and have been approved by the Providence Fire Marshal’s office. These plans are designed to demonstrate the maximum use of each space. No tables, chairs, bars, stages, dance floors, dj equipment, etc. can be added to any space without reducing the occupancy capacity of the space. Any proposed change to one of the approved floor layouts must be submitted to the Brown Fire Safety Officer for approval.
V. Specific Requirements

**Firefighter Details**

If you can reasonably expect more than 300 attendees at the event, you **must** contact Brown Fire Safety at least 7 business days prior to the start of the event to request a Providence Fire Department detail firefighter. Although a detail firefighter is not required for **every** event with more than 300 attendees, the University is responsible for notifying the fire department of all these events. The Providence Fire Marshal will determine when a firefighter detail is required. The cost of the detail is the responsibility of the event sponsor. A department account number (or a check) must be supplied to the Fire Safety Officer before a detail will be scheduled. Contact the Fire Safety Officer for rates at (401) 863-3462.

**Decorations**

**All decorations, wall coverings or sound insulation must be flame resistant**, as specified in the fire code. Decorations include: crepe paper, posters, construction paper, streamers, banners, paper center-pieces and the like. Contact the Fire Safety Officer with questions concerning the flammability of any materials you plan to use in your event space.

**Large Events**

If more than 1,000 attendees are expected, a **Crowd Management Plan** must be developed and filed with the Providence Fire Department and trained **Crowd Managers** must be present throughout the event. Any show or musical concert seating more than 2,000 attendees must use reserved seating only. Contact Fire Safety for additional information at least 3 weeks prior to the event.

**Smoke/Fog Machines**

Because most common spaces in campus buildings are equipped with smoke detectors connected to the building’s fire alarm system, the use of **smoke or fog machines is not allowed without specific approval** from the Fire Safety Officer. In most cases, the use of smoke or fog machines will require a detail from the Providence Fire Department.

**Pyrotechnics**

The use of any pyrotechnic devices, fireworks or any explosive material is prohibited. While some fireworks may be legally purchased in the State of Rhode Island, their use on campus is still prohibited.

**Open Flames**

Open flames are generally prohibited in assembly spaces. Section V of this program outlines guidelines for the safe use of candles by the Chaplain’s Office for religious services, Dining Services and their approved contractors for their events and the safe use of Sterno gel type fuel. The use of open flames outdoors is regulated by Providence City Ordinances.

**Use of Candles**

The use of candles is generally prohibited at Brown University. Candles may be used for religious ceremonies sponsored by the Chaplain’s Office or by Dining Services or their approved contractors for
specific events. A trained person with access to a Type “ABC” fire extinguisher must be present when candles are used. Whenever candles are used by Dining Services or the Chaplain’s Office, the following guidelines must be observed:

- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Lighted candles should always be within sight.
- Keep burning candles away from drafts, vents and air currents.
- A candle is an open flame that can easily ignite any combustible material nearby. No combustible materials (paper, cloth, baskets, table decorations, etc.) may be placed within 12 inches of a candle flame. Candles with combustible items embedded in them are not permitted.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over, are made from a material that can't burn and are large enough to collect dripping wax. Place candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface in a place where it is not likely to be knocked over.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to 1/4 inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within two inches of the holder or decorative material.
- Never move a burning candle. Glass containers and liquid wax can get very hot. Extinguish flame and allow wax to harden before moving.

**Use of Sterno® gel type fuel for Food Warming**

Sterno® gel type fuel may be used for food warming at approved events, as long as the Event Manager adheres to the following guidelines:

- A trained attendee with access to a Type “ABC” fire extinguisher must be present whenever Sterno® gel type fuel is used.
- Never use water to extinguish a fire involving Sterno® gel type fuel since water may actually spread the fire.
- No combustible materials (paper, baskets, table decorations, table linens, etc.) may be placed within 6 inches of a burning fuel container.

When working with Sterno® gel type fuel, **ALWAYS:**

- Use CAUTION when handling OPEN FLAME products
- Use a blunt object, such as a spoon, to pry off the lid
- Cup hand over lid when opening can
- Remove excess gel from lid if it is being used as a regulator
- Wash fuel residue from hands
- Place the can underneath the chafing dish or beverage urn before lighting
- Make sure cans are placed securely in equipment
- Use a long handled match or butane lighter to light cans
- Use a snuffer paddle, regulator or saucer to extinguish flame
- Wait until can is cool before touching
When working with Sterno® gel type fuel, **NEVER:**
- Use a sharp knife to pry off the lid
- Use a lit can to light another can
- Carry lit cans
- Carry chafing dishes or beverage urns with lit cans
- Touch cans while still hot
- Allow loose clothing, napkins or tablecloths near flame
- Allow hair to fall near flame
- Use hands to extinguish flame
- Blow out flame of Sterno® gel type fuel to extinguish

Small amounts of Sterno® gel type fuel shall be stored in closed containers in a cool dry place (40-120°F) away from sources of heat or open flame. If large amounts of Sterno gel type fuel is to be stored in a University building please contact the Fire Safety Officer to determine appropriate storage requirements. For more information about Sterno® gel type fuel education and safety, please refer to the following website: [http://www.sterno.com/education_and_safety.aspx?kwid=1&descid=2&pg=education_and_safety.aspx](http://www.sterno.com/education_and_safety.aspx?kwid=1&descid=2&pg=education_and_safety.aspx)

### VI. Outdoor Events

Outdoor events are subject to the requirements of the R.I. Fire Code in terms of egress and general fire safety. Based on the size and nature of the event, the Providence Fire Marshal may require a detail firefighter to be present for events with more than 1000 attendees.

**Tents**

Under the Fire Code, a tent is considered a temporary structure – a building. Therefore, all safety requirements that are applicable to buildings are also applicable to tents. This includes tents where the sides are not attached.

In general, tents are only permitted on a temporary basis and can cover only 75 percent of the open area. There must be 10 feet between stake lines. Every tent must be made of a fabric that is inherently fire resistant or has been treated with a fire retardant. Proof of flame resistance, other than the tag sewn into the tent fabric, must be provided. All tents must be inspected by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (i.e. the Providence Fire Inspection Bureau) prior to the event.

All tents will have a minimum of two (2) remote means of egress with open aisles of sufficient width (minimum of 36 inches) leading to the exits. The exits must have Exit signs. Tents, larger than 1200 sq. ft. (30’ x 40’, or 20’ x 60’ for example) which are used at night, must have lighted Exit signs and Emergency lighting.

Most fuels (i.e. LPG, propane, diesel, etc.) are not allowed under the tent for cooking or heating. Fuel containers must be kept a minimum of five (5) feet from the tent and be protected from damage. No combustible material or vegetation is allowed with 10 feet of any tent. Hay, corn stalks, etc. are not allowed inside or attached to a tent. The use of sterno for warming pre-cooked foods, or a butane powered cook top requires a special permit from the Providence Fire Prevention Bureau. This form must be submitted a minimum of 24 hours before the event.
Smoking is not allowed in any tent per R.I. General Laws and signs shall be posted inside the tent to that effect. Portable fire extinguishers are required at each exit. Personnel shall be available who know how to operate a fire extinguisher. A means of providing emergency communications is also required.

The Providence Fire Department is the Authority Having Jurisdiction over all tent installations and may require detail firefighters to be present during any event inside a tent. That decision will be made by the Providence Fire Marshal based on the size and type of event. Contact the Fire Safety Officer for more information.

**Lightning**

Lightning is an atmospheric discharge of electricity usually accompanied by thunder, which typically occurs during thunderstorms. A leader from a bolt of lightning can travel at speeds of 60,000 miles per second, and can reach temperatures approaching 54,000 °F.

The complete Lightning Safety Program can be accessed from the homepage of the website of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at: [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/). Event sponsors and managers are encouraged to review this program for complete information.

The Lightning Safety Program applies to all students, faculty, staff, and any others who may attend outdoor events where severe weather or lightning could occur. While these precautions may commonly apply to outdoor sporting events, other types of outdoor events could include concerts, receptions, camping trips, celebrations, or demonstrations. Specific responsibilities for **Event Managers** are outlined within the program.

Due to safety concerns associated with lightning, no outdoor event held on Brown University property is exempt from this policy. It is highly recommended that this protocol be maintained before, during and after any incidence of lightning. Members of the Brown University community attending events not hosted by Brown University are encouraged to follow the event hosts’ lighting safety program or this program in the absence of such a program.

**Lightning-Safe Position** – the best position to assume should you be unable to find a safe location during a thunderstorm. It involves crouching on the ground with your feet together, your weight on the balls of your feet, your head lowered, and ears covered.

**Event Manager** – designated person(s) in charge of monitoring weather conditions, recognizing the threat of lightning, declaring a lightning emergency, and coordinating the relocation of event attendees within the affected area. During intercollegiate sporting events, this individual will be designated by the Department of Athletics (typically certified athletic trainers, coaches or Department of Athletics administrators). During other outdoor events, this individual will be the designated on-site event sponsor from the group sponsoring the event. This individual is responsible to make safety decisions.

**Weather watcher** – a person designated by the **Event Manager** to monitor weather conditions and report any development of a severe thunderstorm back to the **Event Manager**. This person could be the **Event Manager**.

**Safe Location** – designated area in which it is likely to be safe to reside during incidence of lightning. These locations are most often fully enclosed, frequently inhabited buildings.
The Event Manager should actively look for signs of developing local thunderstorms, such as high winds, darkening clouds, or any actual incidence of lightning or thunder. Consider having a reliable on-site means of monitoring local weather forecasts for storm warnings so that Event Managers have ample time to prepare for relocation. Notify event attendees when severe weather threatens.

It is important for Event Managers to know the closest safe location in proximity to the field, playing area, or event area, and how long it will take to relocate the group (team or other) there. The primary choice for a safe location is any fully enclosed building. During a thunderstorm it is always preferable to be inside a building rather than outdoors. Once inside the building, avoid electrical equipment, wired telephones and plumbing fixtures as these may all provide a path for lighting if the building is struck. A standard canvas tent does NOT provide protection from lightning.

If an enclosed building is unavailable at the time of the lightning storm, a secondary choice for a safe location is a fully enclosed vehicle with a metal roof and closed windows. Any team van or bus, or any private vehicle is recommended; however, convertible cars and golf carts do not provide protection from lightning danger. It is also critical that individuals not touch any part of the metal framework inside of the vehicle during ongoing thunderstorms.

When considering the resumption of any outdoor University event, Event Managers are highly recommended to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or clap of thunder before returning outdoors to the event location. Each time lightning or thunder is observed, a 30 minute countdown should be reset.
VII. Using the Event Safety Checklist

90 Minutes Prior to the Start of the Event:

✓ Check the panic hardware on all exit doors to assure smooth operation
✓ Open all exit doors to check the door swing, and remove any obstructions
✓ Check to make sure that any handicapped accessible entrances are unlocked and unobstructed
✓ Confirm that there are at least two clear exits
✓ All halls, egress passageways must be clear and unobstructed
✓ Fire doors must never be blocked open or chained shut
✓ Stairways must be clear
✓ Confirm that exit signs are present, visible and appear to be operating properly.
✓ Confirm that adjoining spaces present no obvious fire hazards.
✓ Fire extinguishers must be available for use. Check to be sure the pressure gauge is in the green zone.
✓ Know the location of fire alarm pull stations and assure that they are visible and easily accessible.

At the Beginning of the Event and Between Musical Sets:

The following announcement must be made at the start of the event, and between musical sets:

“In the event of a fire alarm, please proceed calmly to a nearby exit, leave the building and move away from the doorway.
Please note the location of nearby exits.
Be aware that the way you entered may not be the most direct way out.
Sitting or standing in the aisles and doorways is not permitted.
Smoking is not allowed inside any University building.
Please turn off or silence all pagers and cell phones.”

During the Event:

✓ Assure that the occupancy capacity of the space has not been exceeded
✓ Continue to monitor all exits, halls and stairways to be sure they are maintained clear and unobstructed.
✓ Ask anyone blocking an aisle or a doorway to move.

After the Event:

✓ At the completion of the event, the responsible person shall complete and sign the Fire Safety Checklist to verify that all appropriate fire safety measures were completed. Please be sure to include the actual attendance number in the space provided.
✓ Fold the form in thirds (with Fire Safety address facing out), tape or staple the form and drop it into campus mail to Box 1914.
VIII. Responsibilities

Event Sponsors:

- Groups that sponsor events in University buildings must appoint a responsible person whenever attendance at the event will exceed 50. That person must be familiar with the university’s Emergency Action Plan. The Emergency Action Plan is available on-line at the Brown University Office of Environmental Health and Safety web site: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/fire/

- The responsible person must also complete the Fire Safety for Events Checklist. The form is available on-line at the following web site: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/restricted/checklist_events.pdf

- Whenever an event will have 300 or more attendees the responsible person must request a firefighter detail from Fire Safety at least 7 business days prior to the start of the event and provide an account number or check to cover the cost of the detail.

- The responsible person shall perform an inspection of the space before the start of the event using the checklist and be present throughout the duration of the event to assure compliance with this program.

- If food warming is required, ensure that the guidelines for the safe use of Sterno® type gel type fuel are followed as described in this program.

- At the completion of the event, the responsible person shall complete and sign the Fire Safety for Events Checklist to verify that all appropriate fire safety measures have been completed. Be sure to include the actual attendance in the space provided at the top of the form. Forward the completed form to Fire Safety via campus mail to Box 1914.

Facilities Management:

- Assure that the set-up of tables and chairs is done in accordance with fire code specifications as referenced in Section V of this program.

- Be responsible for the installation and maintenance of life safety equipment (fire alarms, sprinklers, emergency lighting, exit signs, doors and emergency hardware.)

Environmental Health & Safety – Fire Safety:

- Provide training regarding the implementation of this program.

- Schedule Providence Fire Department detail firefighters upon request and coordinate all detail billing.

- Assist with Crowd Management for significant University events upon request.

- Review the policy annually and update as needed.

- Maintain a list of capacities for all assembly areas.

IX. Training Requirements

Emergency Action Plan training is required for all faculty, staff & students. Emergency Action Plan training will be conducted in accordance with the University’s EAP Program located at the following URL: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/EHS/fire/
Crowd Manager Training is required for Crowd Managers working events of 1000 or more attendees. The training is provided by the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal’s Office and can be scheduled through the Fire Safety Office.

X. References


Candle Corporation of America, **Sterno – Education and Safety Website**, January 2007, [www.sterno.com](http://www.sterno.com)