

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Martin O'Malley
Governor

William E. Barnard
State Fire Marshal



AERIAL LUMINARIES KNOWN AS “SKY LANTERNS” ARE PROHIBITED IN MARYLAND

PIKESVILLE, MD (February 15, 2013) – The Office of the State Fire Marshal regularly receives requests from the public concerning the use of aerial luminaries commonly referred to as, “Sky Lanterns”. These devices, typically constructed with oiled rice paper on a bamboo frame, are released into the atmosphere after a candle or fuel cell is ignited causing the trapped air inside the device to become heated and allows the lantern to rise upward and float away with the upper air currents. Once aloft, they may travel significant distances away from the release site and return to earth often before the flame is fully extinguished. This action can result in combustibles at the landing site becoming engulfed with flames. As a direct result, the potential for uncontrolled fire to occur involving a structure or vegetation poses a serious threat to fire and life safety.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Code 29.06.01.08T specifically addresses the issue of “Sky Lanterns”. The code permits the prohibition of sky lanterns throughout the State of Maryland where circumstances make their use a hazard.

The probable fire risk associated with these devices is cause for fire safety officials to restrict their use in the best interest of public safety.

The Maryland State Fire Prevention Commission recently updated the State of Maryland Fire Prevention Code on January 1, 2013. The updated State Fire Prevention Code is available for download at the OSFM website: <http://mdsp.org/firemarshal>. Access the document through the ‘Document Downloads’ tab on the left side of the page.



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at: www.mdsp.org/firemarshal and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

Media contact: Bruce D. Bouch, Deputy State Fire Marshal; 443-324-6876

1201 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville, MD 21208