



Position Statement

Chinese Lanterns

July 2013

Publicity Line

The Chief Fire Officers' Association is calling for an urgent review on the use of the floating paper lanterns as they operate in a unregulated and uncontrolled way.

There is now video evidence of a lantern causing a major fire in the West Midlands which has required 200+ firefighters, 39 fire appliances and 3 hydraulic platforms.

CFOA does not support the use of these devices and asks members of the public and event organisers to refrain from using them. Whilst these lanterns are undoubtedly a popular and beautiful sight, the potential damage they can cause is significant.

England ✓

Wales ✓

Scotland ✓

Northern Ireland ✓

- CFOA urges fire and rescue services to discourage the use of the floating paper lanterns.
- These floating lanterns not only constitute a fire hazard but also pose a risk to livestock, agriculture, camping activities, thatched properties and hazardous material sites.
- Police and coastguards also suffer a loss of resources whilst having to deal with lantern sightings being mistaken as something else such as a distress flare or UFO. Internationally, certain brands of fire lanterns have been banned¹ and there has been a temporary ban on all such products in Australia following a series of wildfires.
- Several opportunities exist to discourage the use of Chinese lanterns. FRSs could:
 - Work with their local trading standards offices to control the use and design of these products
 - Work with their local police authority to discourage the approval of events licences for events that plan to release the lanterns
 - Work with local events licensors to discourage the use of these lanterns
 - Scope out the possibility of litigation with interested parties, local police, civil aviation authority.

¹ [Consumer Agency Ombudsman](#)