



## 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 banned<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> [Consumer Agency Ombudsman](#)