



# News Release

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections  
Public Safety Services

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Baton Rouge, LA 70806

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.lasfm.org](http://www.lasfm.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Fire Marshal Warns of Dangers Associated with Sky Lanterns**

**Baton Rouge, LA** – Whether it be a wedding, a concert, or ceremonies remembering lost loved ones, there is little doubt as to the growing popularity of Kongming Lanterns, or as they are most commonly known as: sky lanterns.

Unfortunately, despite the beautiful glow they emit as they gracefully ascend upward, sky lanterns, which basically operate as miniature hot air balloons, hold horrific potential of great devastation.

Constructed of very thin rice paper or a thin paper membrane, the lanterns, which were first used in 3rd century China, are propelled skyward as an open flamed fuel source heats the air inside, changing its density and making it lighter.

Once aloft, they can travel for miles, and because they are guided directionally by the wind, users have no control on where they land—which is why over two (2) dozen states, a number of countries, and many municipalities have either banned them or restricted their use.

A number of laws and regulations have been passed and/or under consideration after a number of high-profile fires:

- Over 800 acres of land in South Carolina was burned in July 2011 after a sky lantern descended in a densely wooded area near Myrtle Beach. The fire took days to extinguish.
- A 2013 fire inflicted approximately \$9,000,000 in damage to a plastics plant in Smethwick, England, where surveillance cameras captured images of the lantern that started the fire.
- In 2014, a number of vegetation fires as well as the continuing drought in California prompted officials to ban the lanterns as a fire hazard.
- On May 2, 2015, a cell phone tower in Gastonia, North Carolina was ignited after a number of sky lanterns were blown into it after being released from an area rock concert. The height of the fire on the tower was higher than the fire department could reach with water.

Ironically, a city in China, Sanya, banned the lanterns because they posed a danger to aircraft.

As a result of the increasing popularity of sky lanterns and the potential increase of destructive fires relating to their use, the National Association of State Fire Marshals passed a resolution in 2013, encouraging a nationwide ban of the lanterns.

The Louisiana State Fire Marshal responded by ordering a ban on the distribution, sale, and use of sky lanterns in the State of Louisiana. Violations of the order can result in criminal and/or civil penalties.

**END – END – END**

**LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

**News Release – Addendum (Sky Lantern Ban; 5/19/15)**



Photograph courtesy of Google Images inquiry.



Smethwick, West Midlands, England fire; June 30, 2013 (Photograph courtesy of Google Images inquiry).



Nam Yuen District, Thailand fire; November 6, 2014 (Photograph courtesy of Google Images inquiry).



Photograph courtesy of Google Images inquiry.

**THE ORIGINAL**

**WORLD-CLASS FIREWORKS**  
The Top of the World

**Sky Lantern**

**DIRECTIONS**  
PLEASE READ ALL DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE LAUNCHING LANTERNS.

1. Be very careful when taking lanterns out of the package because the paper is very thin and will tear easily.
2. Carefully unfold paper and gently open lantern to its original shape as shown on picture.
3. Open up the corners of the fuel pad refer to Picture 1. Hold the lantern upright and have another person light two corners of the fuel pad refer to Picture 2.
4. Hold the lantern at the top and bottom for 15 to 20 seconds, and then let the lantern go when it wants to tug away from your hands.

**CAUTIONS**

1. Keep the Lanterns in a dry area and avoid humidity.
2. Keep fire extinguisher nearby when launching lanterns.
3. Be sure to launch lanterns during calm and windless weather. The wind speed must be less than 5 miles per hour.
4. Never light lanterns in a building or house and always launch in an open area.
5. Avoid launching lanterns around trees, buildings, houses, or any high obstructions that may catch lanterns.
6. Avoid launching lanterns within 5 miles of an airport. Avoid high voltage wires, transformers, substations, and gas stations or any explosive or hazardous area.
7. Release the lantern immediately when it wants to split from your hands. Don't hold too long, the fuel pad becomes very hot.
8. Don't lean anything to the lanterns.
9. Children must have your's supervision when launching lanterns.

**DECLARATION**  
Sky Lanterns are operated with open fire. The user shall be solely responsible for any and all accidents that may occur while using and launching the Sky Lanterns. Manufacturer, Wholesaler, Retailer and Shipper are held unaccountable for any and all accidents. Using this lantern, you are held to have full knowledge and understanding of the proper use of launching SKY LANTERNS and accept this DECLARATION.

**THESE LANTERNS ARE SAFE WHEN USED CORRECTLY THEY ARE NOT TOYS AND SHOULD NOT BE USED BY CHILDREN.**

KM65434  
8 452536 443416  
MADE IN CHINA

100% Biodegradable, Fire-resistant Paper

Photograph courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office.