



# Washington State Building Code Council

*Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare*

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## STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 15-07

**CODE:** 2012 IFC: Chapter 2 Definitions  
Section 307 OPEN BURNING, RECREATIONAL FIRES AND  
PORTABLE OUTDOOR FIREPLACES  
Section 307.5 ATTENDANCE

**SECTION:** 2012 IFC /Definitions:

**OPEN BURNING.** The burning of materials wherein products of combustion are directed into the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber. Open burning does not include road flares, smudge-pots and similar devices associated with safety or occupational uses typically considered open flames, *recreational fires* or use of portable outdoor fireplaces. For the purpose of this definition, chamber shall be regarded as enclosed when, during the time combustion occurs, only apertures, ducts, stacks, flues or chimneys necessary to provide combustion air and permit the escape of exhaust gas are open.

**PORTABLE OUTDOOR FIREPLACE.** A portable, outdoor, solid-fuel-burning fireplace that may be constructed as steel, concrete, clay or other non-combustible material. A portable outdoor fireplace may be open in design, or may be equipped with a small hearth opening and a short chimney or chimney opening in the top.

**RECREATIONAL FIRES.** An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet (904 mm) or less in diameter and 2 feet (610 mm) or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

**2015 IFC/Definitions:**

**SKY LANTERN.** An unmanned device with a fuel source that incorporates an open flame in order to make the device airborne. (Note: Although the 2015 IFC has not yet been adopted by the SBCC, the TAG did not identify any concerns with this new definition. The definition is adequate for the purposes of this interpretation)

**QUESTION 1:** Does the use of a sky lantern or other sky luminary fall under **OPEN BURNING** or under **RECREATONAL FIRE**?

**ANSWER 1:** **OPEN BURNING.** A sky lantern is not defined in the 2012 IFC. **As now defined in the 2015 IFC**, these devices ‘incorporate(s) an open flame in order to make the device airborne.’ The 2012/2015 definition **OPEN BURNING** states that ‘the products of combustion are directed through the ambient air without passing through a stack or chimney from an enclosed chamber.’ Thus the devices would be covered under the definition of **OPEN BURNING**.

These devices would not fit the definition of **RECREATIONAL FIRE**, as they are not stationary, i.e., they become airborne and travel randomly.

**QUESTION 2:** Since a sky lantern or sky luminary cannot be physically attended to until the fire is extinguished per the requirements of the code, is their use permitted?

**ANSWER 2:** **NO.** A sky lantern is not permitted to travel randomly. 2015 IFC **Section 308.1.6 Open-flame devices will require** sky lanterns to be tethered; they may not be used in a manner that would allow them to travel freely.

**SUPERSEDES:** None

**REQUESTED BY:** City of Renton