

COMMUNIQUE

du commissaire des incendies

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FLYING LANTERNS POSE A POTENTIAL FIRE HAZARD

In 2009, the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) became aware of the existence of a consumer product that posed a serious fire safety hazard, the Flying Lantern (also known as a sky lantern), which was sold by Canadian online distributors of fireworks products and at retail stores. The OFM has recently received a number of reports that indicate an increase in the use of these lanterns, and still has the same concerns regarding fire risks associated with the use of this product.

The Flying Lantern is a small paper hot-air balloon, fuelled by an open flame. When released, the hot air produced by the fuel source can lift the lantern to extreme heights and allows it to drift for long distances until the fuel is depleted. These lanterns are often released in large numbers to generate an impressive visual effect.

Due to their uncontrolled and unpredictable flight path, the lanterns can land on trees, building rooftops, or other combustible properties, while still ignited, and potentially cause a fire.

Based on these concerns, the OFM issued [Fire Marshal Communiqué 2009-07](#) on May 27, 2009 and Public Education Matters e-notices on May 28, 2009 and August 1, 2012, to inform fire departments about this product and the fire safety concerns, and to advise them to caution members of their community about the potential fire hazards associated with the Flying Lantern.

Around the time when the 2009 Communiqué was released, the OFM sent a letter to Health Canada urging it to take action to prevent the sale of Flying Lanterns. In response, Health Canada conducted a study of this product and concluded that the results did not support a need to take regulatory action against the sale of Flying Lanterns. Health Canada indicated that it had not received any reports of incidents or injuries related to the use of Flying Lanterns, but would continue to monitor the media for incidents related to the use of Flying Lanterns.

Fire departments are encouraged to report any incidents related to the use of this product to Health Canada by completing their online [Consumer Incident Report Form](#) or by

sending an e-mail to the Surveillance Coordination Unit of the Consumer Product Safety Directorate's Risk Assessment Bureau at HECSB_CPSD_RAB_SCU@hc-sc.gc.ca.

In addition, the OFM reminds the fire service to take appropriate action to caution members of their community about the potential fire hazards related to the use of the Flying Lanterns. When a fire department becomes aware of a specific instance of Flying Lanterns being used and when the identity of the "owner" can be determined, consideration should be given to enforcement action through the use of the Fire Code [Division B, Sentence 2.4.4.1.(3), or Article 2.4.4.3 or Article 2.6.3.4.], an inspection order, or a municipal by-law, as applicable.

Enquiries regarding enforcement measures should be directed to the manager of the OFM's Community Safety Enhancements Unit, who can be reached by telephone at 1-800-565-1842.