

Safety Alert

Consumer Flamethrowers

The Office of Fire Prevention and Control has received requests regarding the relationship of the Fire Code and flamethrowers, thus generating a need for clarification on the safety of these devices.

Flamethrowers are devices that will discharge a flaming blast of gasoline, diesel, or alcohol fuel in a handheld demand system. Advertised uses include, forestry, snow & ice removal, concerts, firefighter training, “fun display of fire”, etc. Manufacturers claim effective flame distances of 10' - 110'+. These devices work by storing the fuel (gas, diesel, alcohol) in a pressurized tank, depressing the trigger expels the fuel which is then ignited at the tip by a small butane flame that acts as a pilot torch. Due to the distances and method that flaming fuel is released these devices create a serious fire and safety hazard and have the potential to start an unintended fire in the area where they are discharged.

The NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control holds the opinion that flamethrowers meet the definition of an open flame device, as described in Section 308.1.6 of the Fire Code. The use of these devices may also be regulated by Section 307 of the Fire Code and/or Section 5608 of the Fire Code and may require a permit from the AHJ based on the intended use.

- 308.1.6 Open-flame devices. Torches and other devices, machines or processes liable to start or cause fire shall not be operated or used in or upon wildfire risk areas, except by a permit in accordance with Section 105.6 secured from the fire code official.
- 307.1 General. A person shall not kindle or maintain or authorize to be kindled or maintained any open burning unless conducted and approved in accordance with Sections 307.1.1 through 307.5.
- 5608.1 General. Outdoor fireworks displays, use of pyrotechnics before a proximate audience and pyrotechnic special effects in motion picture, television, theatrical and group entertainment productions shall comply with Sections 5608.2 through 5608.10 and NFPA 1123 or NFPA 1126.

Users of these devices should contact their local Fire Code Official or Authority Having Jurisdiction prior to use, and verify compliance with Fire Code, Permitting Requirements and Fire Safety Guidelines.

