

Celebration

The tradition of bonfire celebrations
Goes back centuries.

In early days the bonfires celebrated
Light's victory over Darkness
And marked our control over Fire
And lighting the dark of night.

Newer meanings came with
Bonfires burning away the old years
And lighting the path
with warm welcomes to New Years.

Bonfires and beacons signalled through the dark
And always around the bonfires
Warmly dancing
Were the celebrations.

But celebrations
Like bonfires can get out of hand
Can lose the fun
Bring fear and pain
And need control.

**“ Celebrations are open and fun
Let's keep Bonfires that way ”**



If you are having a bonfire...

DO

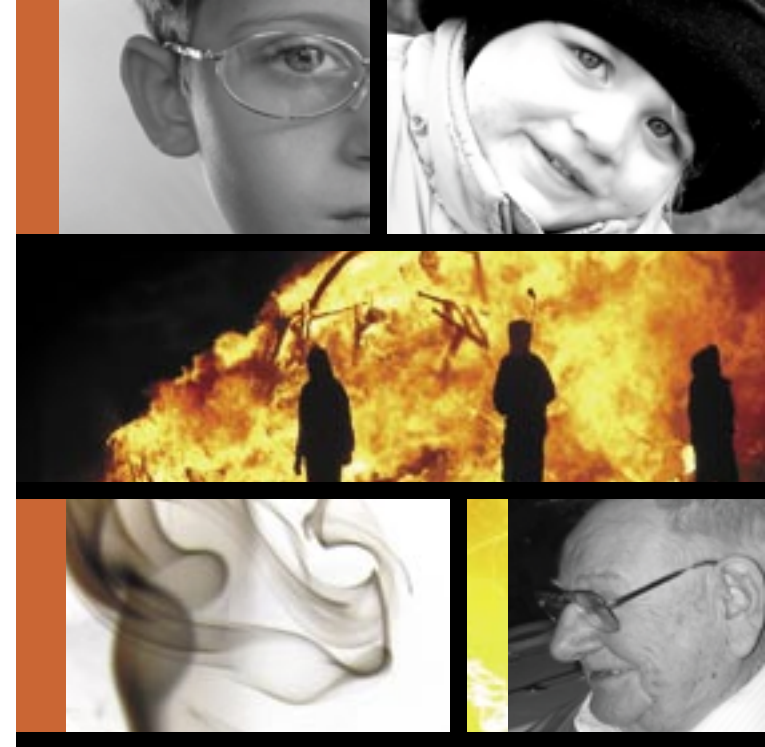
- Plan the event and consult properly
- Choose an appropriate site
- Have a competent adult in charge
- Check that all is safe during the event
- Contact the Fire Brigade if anything goes wrong
- Organise a clean up afterwards

DON'T

- Stockpile material too early
- Build the bonfire too high
- Place hazardous material on the fire
- Light with flammable liquid
- Allow children anywhere near the bonfire

Further information is available from your

- Local Council
- Local Housing Executive District Office
- Fire Brigade District Headquarters



BONFIRES

Bonfires are one of the ways in which Northern Ireland people celebrate their history. They can be great fun, but each year some of these events injure people, damage property and ruin our environment.

Following the safe practice recommended in this leaflet, will ensure that bonfires are a much more enjoyable experience for everyone.

Did you realise that:

- *Stockpiling material for burning can be dangerous to children playing, make your neighbourhood look unsightly and encourage pests;*
- *Heat from the fire can cause pvc window frames to melt and glass to crack;*
- *Smoke from the fire is potentially toxic and can affect the health of people nearby, particularly the elderly;*
- *Hazardous substances can explode and injure bystanders;*
- *Remnants of the fire can cause pollution of the ground and water;*
- *Dealing with bonfires costs money that local people pay through rates?*

“ There are a number of simple things that can be done to make our bonfires better for the whole community: ”



Before the event

Consultation

- Plan the event properly and involve the following organisations as early as possible:
 - Local Community Groups
 - The landowner, e.g. the Housing Executive
 - Fire Brigade
 - Police
 - Local Council
- It is always helpful to inform any other nearby property owners.

Position of the Bonfire

- It should be sited in a clear unenclosed space at a safe distance from buildings and overhead cables – as a rule of thumb it should be at a minimum distance of five times its height from property
- Prevailing wind direction should be taken into account to ensure that smoke and fumes do not blow across spectators or nearby homes
- In dry weather the site should be dampened down
- Do not locate on tarmac or asphalt surface

Building the Bonfire

- Stockpiling of material should not begin too early
- The Bonfire should not contain any potentially hazardous material which may explode or give off toxic fumes, e.g.:

- Tyres
- Gas cylinders or aerosols
- Batteries



- The bonfire should be a manageable size
- Remember, if it is 10 metres tall, it should be at least 50 metres from the nearest building

During the event

Lighting up

- The bonfire should only be lit under the guidance of a responsible adult
- Only use domestic firelighters to light the fire
- Never use flammable liquid such as petrol or paraffin as these can cause explosion

Safety

- Act responsibly and do not allow children near the bonfire
- Spectators should be able to move away without being trapped by the crowd
- Ensure that someone checks nearby buildings for heat damage
- If anything goes wrong dial **999** immediately

After the event

Clean Up

- A smouldering bonfire remains a risk – make sure the fire is extinguished
- Organise a clean up of the site

Remember, following this advice, planning sensibly and acting safely will ensure that your bonfire is an enjoyable event for all your community

