

Safety Note 40

2nd Edition, 13/7/22

BARBECUES – FIRE SAFETY & FOOD HYGIENE

Summary			
This guidance note is aimed at anyone intending to hold a barbecue providing helpful tips to ensure the event is both safe and enjoyable.			
Document Control			
Document type (CoP / SN)		SN	
Document owner		David Sharp (Fire Safety Advisor)	
Document status (Draft / Final)		FINAL	
Version		2	
Approved by			
Checked for accessibility	Yes	Date	13/7/22
Date of publication		Next review date	13/7/25
Date of original publication		Revision frequency	3 Years
Superseded documents		N/A	
Related documents		N/A	

Introduction

Each summer many groups hold barbecues on the University grounds ranging from a few individuals having a small gathering to large school events. It is essential these events are well managed to control the fire and food safety risks associated with barbecues. Ideally any event will be arranged utilising the existing Catering venues and barbecues with trained staff however it is accepted Schools and Departments may wish to hold their own barbecue. In these circumstances the sections below outline control measures that should be considered when planning your barbecue.

Event notification process

The university has a process in place to control events held on university premises. This is to ensure that each event is properly planned and managed by ensuring that a risk assessment is completed, and suitable control measures are in place by the organiser. The event

notification process is managed by the Events Team and it should be noted, the event notification form and risk assessment should be submitted a minimum of 28 days before the event. Please see [Code of Practice 33:- Event Management](#) and the online Guide to Planning Your Event ([Events Guide - University of Reading](#)).

The process is applicable to any barbecue planned to be held on university grounds. The only exceptions to this are for fixed barbecues within campus catering facilities run by catering staff, RUSU run barbecues held on the RUSU patio area, and those within university student accommodation grounds where activities are controlled by UPP Ltd.

General health and safety requirements

Some simple measures can be taken before you hold the barbecue to ensure you have suitable equipment and it is correctly located:

- Make sure you have adequate equipment (e.g. suitable size barbecue, utensils, and heatproof gloves for handling hot items).
- Plan where the barbecue will be located:
 - At a suitable distance to ensure smoke from the barbecue does not enter any buildings.
 - Away from combustible items like fences, buildings, trees, shrubs or stored goods.
 - On even ground (to ensure the barbecue is stable and minimise the risk of slips, trips and falls).

Fire safety

- Fires are one of the most significant risks when using a barbecue so ensure you know the location of the closest firefighting equipment, it is recommended this is located no further than 10m away from the barbecue.
- Open fires and bonfires will not be allowed for social events.
- The person(s) who are cooking must not drink alcohol until after they have finished their duties. Likewise, a responsible person must be ready and fit to tackle a fire if the need arises.
- Care should be taken to prevent people getting too close to the barbecue and burning themselves or knocking the barbecue over.
- Never leave the barbecue unattended.
- Make sure that there is nothing which could fall into the barbecue e.g. loose clothes.
- Oil in pans must not be heated on the barbecue.

Charcoal barbecues: -

- ❑ Disposable/ portable barbecues should be firmly placed on a suitable non-combustible stand, they must not be placed directly onto grass.
- ❑ It is recommended that you cover the bottom of the barbecue with charcoal to a depth of no more than 5 cm.
- ❑ Only use solid firelighters to light the barbecue, petrol or other highly volatile fuels must never be used to light charcoal due to the high risk of injury.
- ❑ Leave the barbecue and charcoal to cool fully before moving the barbecue.
- ❑ Do not place used charcoal into a bin until you are sure it is completely cold.

Gas barbecues: -

- ❑ Always follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding use of the barbecue.
- ❑ Check that all pipes and connections are in good condition before lighting.
- ❑ Always change gas cylinders in open air.
- ❑ Turn gas cylinders off before disconnecting the hose.
- ❑ In case of fire or if you think there may be a gas leak turn the gas off immediately.
- ❑ When you have finished cooking turn off the gas cylinder before turning off the barbecue controls, this ensures that any residual gas in the pipeline is used up.

Food safety

Food safety is the other most significant risk to control when using a barbecue. Preventing cross contamination and following good personal hygiene measures are important to ensure the food available is safe to eat.

Cleaning

- ❑ Wash your hands with soap and warm water before preparing food, after handling raw meat and before eating.
- ❑ Keep work surfaces, chopping boards and utensils used for preparation clean.

Storage

- ❑ Keep meat, fish and dairy items in the fridge (ideally 5°C or less) and keep chilled food in an insulated cool box during the barbecue before cooking. It is also important to keep some foods cool to prevent food poisoning germs multiplying, these include salads, dips, desserts, cooked rice dishes and cooked meats.
- ❑ Make sure any food is used within the date code on the packaging.

Preparation and cooking

- Prevent cross contamination by using separate utensils and equipment (e.g. tongs and plates) for raw meat and cooked / ready to eat foods.
- Avoid handling food directly with hands – use tongs or other utensils instead.
- The best time to cook on the barbecue is when the charcoal is glowing with a powdery grey surface. If the barbecue temperature is too hot, meat is likely to burn on the outside but remain raw in the center.
- If cooking for large numbers of people, to ensure the food is thoroughly cooked, you may wish to cook meat indoors before and then finish it on the barbecue.
- Turn food regularly and move it around the barbecue to ensure even and thorough cooking.
- Don't add sauce or marinade that has already been used with raw meat as this may contaminate cooked food with harmful bacteria.
- Make sure meat is thoroughly cooked and steaming hot all the way through (burgers, sausages, chicken and pork should not be pink in the center and the juices should run clear).
- You can use a probe thermometer to check items are fully cooked. Aim for an internal temperature of 75°C or higher to make sure any harmful bacteria have been killed.
- Serve food immediately after cooking. Any food left over after 2 hours from the time it was cooked should be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Useful Information

- [Safety Code of Practice 29: - Food Safety & Hygiene](#)