

Guidelines for the Use of Portable Outdoor Fireplaces

I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the use of portable outdoor fireplaces (e.g., fire pits) on property owned by the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB).

II. Definitions

- Combustible – Material that has the potential to catch on fire and burn when exposed to heat, flames, or other ignition sources.
- Fully Extinguished – A state in which a fire or flame has been completely put out with no remaining embers, heat, or potential for reignition.
- Portable Outdoor Fireplace – A wood-burning fixture that is transportable, designed for outdoor use, and constructed from noncombustible material.

III. Background

The University of Maryland, Baltimore adopts sections of the Building, Fire, and Related Codes of Baltimore City (2020 Edition) related to portable outdoor fireplaces. These guidelines are intended to meet and/or exceed the Baltimore City requirements. All other types of open burning, recreational fires, and bonfires are prohibited.

IV. General Guidance

Portable outdoor fireplaces must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and must be used at least 20 feet away from any structure, air intake vent, combustible material, or property line. The location must be reviewed and approved by the UMB Office of the Fire Marshal.

Outdoor fireplaces must be constantly attended to until the fire is fully extinguished. All persons attending the event, who are not currently tending to the fire, must stay a safe distance away from the outdoor fireplace at all times.

Each outdoor fireplace must have at least one 4A fire extinguisher on-site and readily accessible for emergency use. The UMB Office of the Fire Marshal can provide a fire extinguisher if requested in advance. Fire extinguishers may not be removed from a building, except in an emergency. Fire extinguishers should only be used in an emergency.

Only dry or seasoned firewood may be used. Burning of paper, trash, or other combustibles is prohibited. Extra firewood must be located at least 20 feet away from the open flame.

No accelerants (e.g., gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluid, etc.) may be used to start, re-start, or fuel the fire.

The use of outdoor fireplaces may be postponed or cancelled by the UMB Office of the Fire Marshal if environmental conditions create an additional hazard to life or property.

Events using portable outdoor fireplaces must be approved in advance by the UMB Office of the Fire Marshal. Requests must be sent via email to FireMarshal@umaryland.edu at least one week before the event and must indicate the date and time of the event, the location of the outdoor fireplace, and the name of the individual responsible for complying with these guidelines. The UMB Office of the Fire Marshal will perform an inspection prior to or at the start of the event.

V. Extinguishment And Clean-Up

The event organizer is responsible for extinguishment and clean-up of the outdoor fireplace.

1. A minimum of five gallons of water shall be used to extinguish the fire. The event organizer is responsible for providing a bucket of water or hose.
2. Once flames are no longer visible, use a rake or shovel to turn charred materials to ensure the fire is fully extinguished.
3. Ash and debris from the fireplace must be placed into a metal or noncombustible can/bucket and removed from campus.
4. Allow the fireplace to fully cool before relocating.