

Fire Performance Safety 101

There are 4 essential safety rules to follow for any fire performance:

1) ALWAYS have a dedicated fire safety (or safeties)!

- Your fire safety/safeties should be equipped with the appropriate materials to put out flame (IE: duvetyne fire blanket, damp cotton towel, fire extinguisher, etc) and be dressed in fire-safe fabrics and attire.
- Your fire safety/safeties should *never* be performing or operating other tasks while acting as safety. During performance, fire safeties should be focusing exclusively on the following:
 - Watching the fire performance ready to alert the performer and put out any unintentional fires. Also, fire safety should be ready to intervene if any audience members or unwary pedestrians attempt to enter the performance area. Remember, audience participation is forbidden when involving any kind of fire. No exceptions.
- Be sure to discuss a communication plan with your fire safety/safeties before performance so all parties know what to do in case of unintended fire.

2) Establish 3 separate and clearly defined areas – one for performance, one for fueling props and fuel storage, and one for spinning off excess fuel.

- Ensure your performance area is a clearly defined separate space from the audience/general public.
- Ensure your fuel station is well-marked and out of reach of your audience. Your fuel station should also be monitored by a fire safety or other staff anytime fuel is present.
- You should NEVER allow any open flames or smoke near the fuel storage area. Be sure to set your fuel station a safe distance from where you will be performing.
- Any fuel not actively being used should be stored in sealed metal containers.
- Never spin-off your props inside unless you first wrap the wicks in zip-lock bags to collect the excess fuel. After spinning off, you should always pour the collected excess fuel back into sealed metal containers.

3) Familiarize yourself with event location and check for possible hazards before every performance.

- Upon arrival to your event/venue, set the locations for your performance, fueling, and spin-off zones, and check the performance location for flammables or hazards. Be aware of uneven terrain, low-hanging trees, dry leaves, etc.
- If performing outside, be sure to assess wind conditions and adjust performance as necessary to ensure the safety of the performers, audience, and venue.
- Always know what your emergency exit route should be in case of emergency.
- Familiarize yourself with any local fire bans or regulations/permits that may be required.

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4) Ensure your equipment, costuming, fuels, and physical/mental state is ready before each performance.

- **Equipment:**
 - Check for safety and tighten if needed all fire props prior to every performance.
- **Costuming:**
 - Wear natural fibers such as cotton, silk, linen, or hemp. Beware of synthetic fabrics like nylon, spandex, rayon, or anything that will melt when touched to a flame.
 - Do not perform with gel, hairspray, etc. in your hair. When using a product, check the bottle for any alcohol ingredients and high flammability risks.
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- **Fuel:**
 - Appropriate fuels for fire performers include but are not limited to the following: lighter fluid, Coleman camping fuel (white gas), isopropyl alcohol, denatured alcohol, and paraffin/lamp oil/kerosene. Never use automotive gasoline (petrol).
 - Be sure NEVER to use additives that could be considered pyrotechnics to your performance (read our [blog](#) for more info)!
- **Physical/Mental state:**
 - Before stepping onto the stage for any performance you should first make sure you are mentally and physically prepared to perform.
 - Remember, you should NEVER handle any fire equipment while under the influence.

Other Helpful links and resources:

- Visit [Home of Poi](#) website for a great list of safety information and resources.
- Follow the North American Fire Arts Association (NAFAA) guidelines. More information can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/NAFAA.Org/>.