



Safe Use of Alcohol/Spirit Fuel

Pursuant to the circular re-categorization with effect from 1 January 2018, this Circular substitutes Special Circular No. 13/2013 issued on 15 July 2013 with contents unchanged.

Accidents involving the use of alcohol/spirit fuel have occurred from time to time in Hong Kong. To reduce hazards and avoid accident, guidelines on safe use of alcohol/spirit fuel are listed in the following paragraphs for all Scout leaders and youth members to note and comply with:

A. Basics

1. Alcohol fuel (also known as spirit fuel) is a highly volatile flammable liquid with low ignition point. Under normal environment, the volatile liquid readily gives out considerable amount of flammable alcohol vapour (some people may refer it as alcohol “gas”). If the flammable “gas” encounters a naked flame or other ignition sources (e.g. a burning match or a smoldering cigarette butt, etc.) flashover will occur. The flame would probably flashback to the fuel causing the flammable liquid to start burning and creating dangerous situation.
2. If an operator is engulfed by a plume of flammable ‘gas’ and a flashover occurs, the flame might cause burn to the operator inflicting serious injury.
3. Since flammable alcohol fuel has low ignition point and high burning speed (similar to that of gasoline), backfire incident would occur resulting in propagation of burning from the source to fuel container if operator does not take appropriate control measures to isolate the flammable fuel from fire source or use the fuel improperly. In worse scenario, burning inside a bottle-shaped container could lead to explosion.
4. As alcohol fuel has simple composition of high burning efficiency, incomplete burning of the fuel seldom occurs (a phenomena generally indicated by the creation of yellow flame). Hence, operator might find it difficult to be aware of the flame when using alcohol fuel in daytime or under a sufficient lighting environment and might get burned accidentally.

B. Operator Guidance Notes

1. Operator must follow manufacturer’s instructions and procedures properly when using alcohol fuel in operating alcohol burner or for pre-heating paraffin pressure stove.
2. Never add alcohol fuel directly to a burning or smoldering wood fire and/or campfire setup to improve the burning.
3. Operator has to wait until the hot stove cools down completely and absence of any ignition source before filling the stove with alcohol fuel. Never add the fuel halfway burning.
4. Operator should not ignite any stove inside a tent.
5. It is suggested to use alcohol solid fuel or alcohol gel in priming tray as pre-heating agent for igniting the paraffin pressure stove.
6. When organizing trainings and activities, all Scout units must note and strictly follow the relevant guidelines and requirements as promulgated in the safety circulars issued by Administration Branch, Programme Branch and Training Branch.

C. Handling burning incident

1. Under a safe condition, first aider should extinguish the flame on the casualty immediately to reduce injury.
2. To apply first aid treatment as appropriate.
3. To seek for medical assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason NG', written in a cursive style.

(Jason NG)
for Chief Commissioner