

USC Sterno (Canned Heat) Guidelines

1. Solid alcohol (Sterno) heating of food is permitted provided that the following precautions are taken to prevent ignition of combustible material and ensures the safety of occupants.
2. Sterno use is permitted in public space, (i.e. Public Assembly Space, meeting rooms, etc.) only, it is not permitted in private office space, amphitheatres, sleeping areas, or other non-public space.
3. Outside food vendors shall be allowed to utilize sterno heating devices, providing they comply with the Solid Alcohol (Sterno) Fuel Use Guidelines of USC.
4. Sterno fuel use shall be attended at all times by a member of the catering staff who has been trained in sterno use and fire safety. If a non-catered event, an organizer must be designated as a "Firewatch" to ensure this policy is being complied with.
5. A 10 pound ABC dry chemical extinguisher, or Type K extinguisher, shall be available within ten (10) feet of the serving table or tables.
6. Use of secondary containers for sterno, i.e. fuel holders with cover, is mandatory. Proper tools must be available for the smothering of the flame if needed, i.e. snuffer paddle.
7. All chafing racks and beverage urns using sterno shall be placed on non-combustible mats, ceramic or metal trays extending at least eight inches beyond the sterno container in each direction, to prevent accidental contact with any combustible materials.
8. Sterno shall be placed under food or beverage tray before lighting. Sterno shall only be lit by means of a butane lighter or long handled match. Chafing racks or beverage urns shall not be moved while sterno are lit.
9. Only regular cloth table covers shall be used, paper or plastic table coverings are not permitted. Table decorations must be flame resistant. Combustible material such as plates, napkins, plastic utensils, cups and similar products shall be separated by a minimum of three feet from sterno.
10. Sterno must be immediately extinguished when the food tray is empty or no longer used. When the event is over, all sterno must be extinguished, immediately capped and removed from facility.
11. The Fire Safety staff (below) shall be notified of all sterno usage.
(Jeff Pendley, jeff.pendley@usc.edu and Rob Forsberg, forsberg@usc.edu)
12. In the event of a fire, call both 911 to summon the Fire Department (give the address of the location), and (213) 740-4321 to notify USC Public Safety.