



## Introduction

Traditionally used in Chinese and Thai celebrations Chinese/Sky Lanterns are also known as 'Khood Fay' or 'Khood Loy'. It was believed that wishes written on lanterns would rise up to the heavens. They are now heavily promoted in the UK as an ideal way of celebrating New Year, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, Diwali or other special events.

Retail outlets in West Yorkshire stock 'Chinese Flying Lanterns' for over the counter purchases, they are also readily available via the internet from several companies and have been advertised in daily national newspapers.

## Use

The West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service would fully support a ban of these products, and the purpose of this Note is to raise public awareness about the potential dangers these lanterns pose, and to encourage people not to use them.

### What harm can be caused by a Chinese lantern?

Livestock (e.g. cattle) can eat or become caught in lantern debris in grazing vegetation, or eat lantern parts accidentally chopped into animal feed during harvest.

If an animal eats sharp lantern parts, these can tear and puncture the throat, stomach or internal organs causing internal bleeding or, in worst cases, death.

There is the risk of fire caused by lanterns falling to the ground whilst alight - this can destroy habitats and set fire to property.

Do not be fooled into thinking that 'biodegradable' lanterns are safe! Bamboo can take decades to degrade and the sharp parts can cause injury to animals, plus they still pose a fire risk.

## Further Guidance

Although we are of the opinion that these products should be banned, we welcome in the meantime the issue of a new code of practice for sky lanterns from the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) which is aimed at manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers.

The guidance, which was produced by the TSI in conjunction with government and industry, advises on good practice in the manufacture, distribution, retail and use of sky lanterns in the UK. It covers four areas: design and manufacture; safety checks; warnings and instructions for use and responsible sale.