

Unbroken Spring Burn Perimeter Guide

1st Edition

Welcome to the burn perimeter! Whether this is your first time or your fifteenth, here are the things you need to know when standing the line. Remember the golden rules: have fun, be good to people, and stay safe out there. See you at the rally point!

Equipment and Prep

You are showing up to a major combustion event. As an effigy burns, parts of it might explode and you get a front row seat. Woot! While there, **you may be standing in the same place for up to four hours (or more!)** A certain amount of equipment and preparation is in order.

Equipment

Many of the items on this list are driven by a simple fact; fire sometimes falls from the sky upon you. Sparks, embers, burning chunks of wood, wayward fireworks, fire tornadoes and surges of heat can make it as far as the perimeter. Hilarity ensues.

A word on clothing: natural fibers are your friend. They singe while artificial fibers melt. Denim, wool and newer cotton volunteer shirts are all good choices.

Also, since the weather is a variable it can either be very cold or just tepid. PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

Keep in mind that you might have to be nimble on short notice. If you normally wear a complicated outfit that's hard to run in, consider going simple for a burn perimeter.

- Long sleeved volunteer shirt, non-flammable hat
- Simple outfit that covers you. Layers are good.
- Comfortable, insulating, protective footwear, like an old pair of boots.
- Full water bottle
- High intensity flashlight. Leave your mini-mag at camp.
- Jacket (optional, but highly recommended)
- Small food items (optional, but again recommended)
- Kneepads (optional, but you'll be glad you did)

Quad-Leads: Go check out a radio from dispatch prior to reporting for your shift.

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Preparation

As with any shift you have volunteered for, we expect you to be on time at HQ for sign-in, fully fed and rested and sharing consensual reality.

Further, you want to make sure you are well hydrated, have taken care of any toilet needs and are generally ready to be standing in one place for hours after sundown without any support infrastructure or chance to head to the portos. You can't swing by your camp on this shift so bring snack food and warm layers.

Communication and Overall Structure

A Burn Perimeter is organized by quadrants. The quads are:

Quad 1 - 12:00 to 3:00

Quad 2 - 3:00 to 6:00

Quad 3 - 6:00 to 9:00

Quad 4 - 9:00 to 12:00

All quads are oriented around the structure, whether it be the Temple or Effigy. Generally quads 2 & 3 have a heavier crowd, while quads 1 and 4 are around the back of the effigy and will be reserved for Safety team and Burn Night staff use.

Safety lanes will be located at 3:00 and 9:00.

You will be assigned to one of these quads under the oversight of an experienced Quad Lead.

All communication goes through your Quad Lead. Your Quad Lead will be in direct communication with the Perimeter Lead via Radio and Face to Face communication. Your quad leads will be feeding you information about the burn as they receive it. If you need their attention, turn on your flashlight and point it at them.

You and Your Crowd

There's a ritual to setting a perimeter that we're not going to get into here. If you haven't done this before, talk to your quad lead and follow their directions. At the end of it, you'll be in charge of one section of the perimeter, interacting with the crowd and getting to know them!

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Crowd Control

Here we come to the heart of this thing. We're aware enough to know we can't control anyone, but we can encourage them to control themselves. To that end, we engage participants one at a time, as they come. Get to know them. Be a good host. Ask them to sit down and scoot together. Don't order anyone around. Empower them to encourage their crowd-mates to do the same. We're all here to watch something burn to the ground!

NEVER LEAVE YOUR SECTION. Do not wade into the crowd to deal with something, do not wander off from your position to talk to someone. Once you are set on the perimeter, stay there. If you need to leave the line for any reason, tell your Quad Lead.

Goals

To help you build a safe perimeter, you have a number of concrete goals for your section:

- Get the crowd seated on the playa for at least 4 rows deep, preferably 7+.
- No bikes, art cars, or carts within 60 feet of the perimeter line.
- Keep tripping hazards out of the crowd.
- Discourage idiocy like fighting and laser pointers at eye level.
- Encourage things like joy, connection, awe and wonder.
- **No one without a volunteer Laminated ID light past the burn perimeter.**
 - These are lights that will be attached to the laminate and are color-coded depending on role.

You and Your Crowd, Continued

There are two reasons we want the crowd seated as far back as we can reasonably encourage, the first is that it makes it easier for people to see and it discourages jockeying for a better view, which creates disgruntlement. The second is that it helps stop runners.

Tripping hazards in the crowd are a real pain in the ankle. The common ones are chairs and coolers. Use your judgment, but in general we like to have these not in the first five rows. If someone is reluctant to move one of these items and doesn't seem a good sport, get one of your quad leads involved.

Photographers will be trying to set up tripods right on the perimeter. Most will be cool about it. Use your judgment. Small tripods that don't block the view of the crowd are fine. Certain photographers will be allowed to be on the perimeter line as a volunteer to grab photos. They will have the appropriate lighting and tagging.

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The odds are high that someone may try to get in the perimeter without a laminate. They might brandish a media pass or have a great story full of names you might recognize. **If they don't have a burn laminate or law enforcement credentials, they aren't supposed to be in the perimeter, period, full stop.** There aren't any exceptions to this. Attempt to stop anyone coming in, but do not lay hands on them. If someone absolutely bulls past you, flag down your section lead or the nearest Mobile Volunteer, who will be happy to discuss the matter with them.

Pro Tips for Dealing with Your Crowd:

There are many, many creative and interesting ways of engaging your crowd that individual Volunteers have developed over the years, from sing-alongs to trivia contests to simply chatting honestly and making new friends. Here are a few common pro tips:

- You aren't a cop or paid security. Don't act like it. Social capital is our currency.
- Engage everyone near the front personally. Be warm and welcoming.
- Ask for what you need from the crowd. Empower them to be part of the solution.
- Maintain situational awareness while engaging your section. Don't get tunnel vision.
- Explain to your first few rows that **they** are the perimeter, not the tape and cones. They are helping keep everyone behind them safe and happy.
- Check in regularly with the Volunteers next to you. Be brief and professional.

Runners

Occasionally people will take it into their heads to try to run into the fire. Your job is to try to stop this and your main tools are your crowd and social pressure. If everyone is seated close together, it is hard for a runner to really get going.

If a runner does make a break for it, **do not lay hands on them.** There are lots of reasons for this. Don't do it. Instead notify your Quad Lead who will notify the burn night IC. If a runner breaks, stay in place and spotlight them with your flashlight. Keep an eye out for copycats while your fellow volunteers take care of the runner.

When the Burn Starts

Perimeter Line Volunteer Protocol

You will be notified by your Quad Lead when the burn officially starts. So, settle in and take a knee. Turn to your right, and face the back of your fellow perimeter volunteer. As a Perimeter line volunteer, your responsibility is the space between your front and your fellow volunteers back.

- Watch participants for any signs of distress
 - If you see anything engage them to determine their state. You're a person, they're a person. Use empathy. A friendly face goes a long way to help them.
 - If you have concerns notify your Quad Lead.

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Fire Conclave

Starting shortly before the actual effigy burn, the Procession and Fire Conclave will arrive at the Effigy Site and enter through the Safety Lane. The fire performers will do their thing and once they have exhausted their fuel, encourage them to merge back into the crowd. **No conclave performer is to remain on the side of the perimeter opposite from the crowd.**

Temple & Effigy Burn

At some point the structure will catch fire. Fire is pretty. Don't look at the fire; look at your crowd. Honestly, after you have seen a few burns, the sense of wonder and joy on the crowd's faces is far more interesting. More importantly, you have volunteered to keep them safe, not watch the burn. What you are watching for is runners or the crowd starting to surge forward.

Another thing we traditionally do as Perimeter Volunteers is take one knee as soon as the fire starts. This gives the crowd a good view and allows us to move rapidly. Don't sit all the way down, you might need to stand in a hurry. We will talk about that in the next section.

The Best Laid Plans...

Once in a while, things go sideways. The two main ones we need to worry about are the fire getting a bit rambunctious and the perimeter breaking.

It's common for wind or convection currents to blow the heat and some sparks from the fire toward a particular part of the perimeter. As far as the crowd goes, this is a self-correcting problem. People surge backwards away from the heat and sparks. Encourage them to move with caution and care. Maintain a calm composure and they will follow your lead. When the embers cool and the crowd flows back, remind them where the line is and invite them to sit. Do not re-establish the line farther away from the effigy; it makes things needlessly complicated.

Another problem, which is unusual, is that the perimeter can break before it is actually dropped. If you have done a good job with your crowd, this is unlikely; they trust you when you tell them that you need their help to hold because of a medical or safety issue.

If it does break and your crowd surges toward the fire, don't try to stop them by standing in their way. Your safety is priority one, not getting trampled. Hold your section for as long as you can, then get out of the way and stay safe. If you can't see your fellow Volunteers or Quad Lead, head to your rally point. If you have an event radio that you have turned off for the burn, turn it back on and listen for any instructions.

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All Good Things...

At some point, Incident Command will call perimeter drop. At that point, turn your radio on if you have it, stay out of the way of the crowd, and proceed immediately to your quad's rally point (which will be established before the burn starts). **DO NOT SKIP GOING TO THE RALLY POINT.** Your quad mates can't leave until all of you are accounted for.

If you have problems finding the rally point, wait for the crowd to thin and listen for your quad mates to start calling for you. Use your radio sparingly if you have one. Once everyone is accounted for, your quad lead will release you to clock out at HQ. Good work!

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unBroken Spring Burn Night Logistics

The above listed information is vital to any Perimeter Volunteer. Below, you will find the specifics to how out perimeter will play out at FreezerBurn.

- FreezerBurn's Effigy Burn is scheduled for Sunday night at nine-ish.
- It's always hardest to fill late-in-the-event shifts.

Pre-Burn

- There will be a meeting for Burn Perimeter protocol on Sunday.
 - Time, location, and details will be posted at Ranger HQ.
 - This is usually lasts about 30 minutes.
- We'll ask most folks working Burn Perimeter to return at TBD
 - *(usually! check at HQ for details!)*.
- Shift will be complete after the structure falls, the Perimeter is dropped, and you report back safe at Rally Point.

During the Temple & Effigy Burn

Soft Perimeter:

- **Begins at TBA**
 - This will consist of a pair of volunteers.
 - Participants are still allowed to approach the structure to deposit art and messages into the effigy at this point.

Hard Perimeter:

- **Declared at TBA**
 - Participants are not allowed near the structure as Pyro, Fire, and DaFT begin their preparations
 - No standing or participants in camp chairs for at least four rows deep
 - No Art Cars at least four rows deep
 - Volunteers stand facing the crowd and be ready to interact
- **Temple & Effigy Burn Start TBA**
 - Participants should all be seated and ready for the show to start
 - Take a knee and face to the right. Make certain that you are facing the back of the Perimeter Volunteer to your right.
 - Watch both the participants and the space between the Perimeter Line
- **Conclave (Fire) Performance**
 - Once fire performers complete their art, help them merge back with the crowd on the other side of the perimeter line.

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- **Temple & Effigy Burn**
 - Keep an eye on the participants, and listen for any messages from your quad lead.

Important things to note:

- Up until the actual burn event starts (they set the structure on fire) you will be standing, facing the crowd.
 - Wear comfortable shoes, and bring at least one flashlight.
 - Go to the bathroom early, if needed.
 - Be prepared for the weather.
- Once your Quad Lead verifies that the structure burn has started:
 - Take a knee, facing to the right.
 - Make sure that you're looking at the back of the perimeter volunteer next to you.
 - Keep an eye on both the crowd and the area of space between you and the effigy.
 - This is one of the best shows during the burn. The crowd's reaction to the fire is a beautiful sight.
 - Do NOT drop the Perimeter until instructed to do so by your Quad Lead.

Post Burn

After the Incident Commander lets us drop the Perimeter:

- Check your area of crowd to make sure everyone's ok.
 - If you see someone in need of Medical or Sanctuary, call in your Quadrant Lead and get them to radio Khaki.
 - Return to the rally point, so we know you're safe. Please try to be there within 5-15 minutes.

After the rendezvous, decide:

- Join a Swing or Graveyard shift! We need you! (Even a partial shift helps immensely.)
- OR, take off your Ranger outfit and become part of the problem.
 - Turn in any gear you may have checked out
 - (radio? retrieve your ID!)