

Chafing Fuel

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the ideal chafing fuel to use for my event?

Choose a chafing fuel with a burn time long enough to last the duration of the event. This will prevent the need to change the chafing fuel during service. Also take into consideration the type of catering equipment you will be using. Refer to our Chafing Fuel 101 chart; this chart helps you match-up our chafing fuels with the most commonly used food warming applications.

2. What is the burn time for chafing fuel?

Sterno offers a variety of chafing fuel products that offer burn times from 45 minutes to 6 hours. Please refer to our Chafing Fuel 101 chart; this chart helps you match-up our chafing fuels with the most commonly asked questions about our chafing fuel products.

3. What are the main differences between gel and wick chafing fuels?

Both types provide high quality heat for consistent performance. Wick chafing fuels are available in several varieties ranging in burn time and heat output. Wick fuels are considered a safer option as they are not flammable if spilled and the can stays cool to the touch when lit. Gel chafing fuels offer a strong, hot flame and are a good choice when an event lasts up to two hours. Caution should be used with gel chafing fuels: when lit the can gets very hot; if spilled, the gel will remain lit and could cause proper damage.

4. What does the UL Validation mean?

Sterno was the first manufacturer to earn a UL Validation on our top-selling chafing fuels. This means customers are purchasing products that have safe levels of emission, both indoors and out.

5. What chafing fuel should I use when making s'mores?

Our proprietary Sterno S'mores Heat® is the ideal choice. S'mores Heat® burns for 45 minutes; it is made from non-toxic, clean burning, and biodegradable ethanol gel, making it safe for cooking. The Smart Can™ Indicator alerts you when the can is too hot to handle.

S'mores Maker Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVhSrJNFsBE>

S'mores Maker Jr Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFh-ujqM4z4>

6. When serving from a chafing dish, how can I make certain my food will be at the safe and ideal serving temperature, from the beginning to the end of the event?

During set-up, start with the correct amount of very hot water in your chafing dish's water pan. Also, make sure food is at a minimum internal temperature of 160°F before placing in the chafing unit. Check out this video for a step-by-step guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXa5oVhkwYw>

7. Can I cook food with chafing fuel?

In a typical foodservice operation, Sterno® chafing fuels are designed to maintain proper temperature for serving; they are not designed or intended to cook food.

8. What's the best way to prevent accidental fires from occurring?

Keep chafing fuels away from curtains and other flammable table decorations; just as you would with table candles. Check out this video for more information on safe handling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Rx1mcJAj8>

9. What's the best way to light a can of chafing fuel?

Start by placing the chafing fuel in the designated fuel holder of your chafing unit. Once in place we recommend using a long reach, butane lighter to light the chafing fuel. Under no circumstances should you use a lit can to light another. Check out this video for a complete look on safe handling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Rx1mcJAj8>

10. Is it safe to handle a can of chafing fuel once it's been lit?

No, Sterno recommends extinguishing lit candles before handling. Gel chafing fuel cans become extremely hot when lit. Check out this video for a complete look on safe handling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Rx1mcJAj8>

11. What's the best way to extinguish a can of chafing fuel?

The safest way to extinguish a lit can of fuel is using a snuffer paddle or ceramic saucer. Check out this video for a complete look on safe handling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Rx1mcJAj8>

12. What's the best way to dispose of spent fuel cans?

Sterno chafing fuel cans are made of highly recyclable steel and we ask that you recycle them. For unspent fuel cans, we recommend checking with local authorities as regulations vary from county to county.

13. What is the shelf life for chafing fuel?

Sterno recommends using within 2 years from the date of purchase.

14. What is the "water-like" substance when I open a gallon of methanol or ethanol chafing fuel?

Gel gallons are used differently by the end user than traditional fuel cans. Therefore, gel fuel in a gallon container is designed to be different. Our gel gallon blend allows for the gel to be scooped and dispensed easily.

15. Do you have a flameless Chafing Fuel?

Sterno SpeedHeat® provides instant flameless heat. It is an ideal solution for serving hot food in venues with open flame restrictions.