



# SPARKY THE FIRE DOG® COSTUME GUIDELINES



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### **Sparky the Fire Dog®**

Created on March 18, 1951, the mascot of the National Fire Protection Association was named Sparky®. This lovable canine character conveys important fire safety and other unintentional injury prevention messages to children and adults.

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Please detail what material you would like to use, the purpose of using this material, and what the distribution of the final product will be. Once submitted you should receive a response within two weeks.

No product bearing the image of Sparky may be produced without written permission from the NFPA. All art and advertising using the image of Sparky must be approved by the NFPA prior to their use.

Please be sure that the NFPA has clearly given permission before you use Sparky. In any publication where Sparky appears, the ® mark should be placed at the lower right of his picture with a trademark attribution statement on the first page of a document any time it is used. One ® for each publication is sufficient for the name, but the ® should always be used with the image.

It is important for Sparky to maintain the positive image he has promoted since 1951. Sparky costumes must be purchased from designated licensees:

#### **Robotronics, Inc.**

1610 West 1600  
Springfield, UT 84663-3057  
Phone: 800-762-6876, 801-489-4466  
Fax: 801-489-8241  
Website: [www.robotronics.com](http://www.robotronics.com)  
Email: [info@robotronics.com](mailto:info@robotronics.com)

#### **Shafton, Inc.**

6932 Tujunga Avenue  
N. Hollywood, CA 91605  
Phone: 818-985-5025  
Fax: 818-985-5332  
Website: [www.shaftoninc.com](http://www.shaftoninc.com)  
Email: [info@shaftoninc.com](mailto:info@shaftoninc.com)

### **APPROPRIATE USES**

Sparky costumes may be used for parades and for appearances at schools, fairs, youth group meetings, television appearances, sporting events, community safety events and other functions promoting fire safety.

Inappropriate uses of Sparky include political events, union events, job fairs, or any situation that might compromise the integrity of Sparky, give the appearance of impropriety or negatively reflects the NFPA and its fire safety messaging.

### **APPEARANCE**

Individuals who wear and use the costume must agree to:

- Use the costume only to further public information, education, and awareness of fire and burn prevention (unintentional injuries).
- Not speak during appearances. Conversations or explanations should be carried out by an adult accompanying Sparky.
- Always appear in full costume (helmet, coat, pants, boots and paws).
- Remain anonymous at every appearance and in any publicity connected with an appearance. This includes being photographed without the head.
- Use only costumes that are clean, complete, and in good condition.
- Keep costume out of site before and after use.
- Appear dignified and friendly. Avoid clowning and horseplay.
- Always be accompanied by an adult in public appearances except when not practical, such as a parade float where space is limited.
- Refrain from smoking, using alcohol or drugs immediately prior to and during the Sparky appearance.
- The person wearing the costume must exhibit appropriate animation to be effective. Express sincerity and interest in the appearance by moving paws, head, and legs.
- A person should be assigned to guide Sparky at the elbow.

- After putting the suit on, someone will inspect the suit. Check for the following:
  - Are the pant legs over the boots?
  - Is the coat fastened?
  - Is the head straight?
  - Are the paws tucked under the coat sleeves?
- A private dressing area is necessary for putting on and taking off the costume.
- The person wearing the costume should not rapidly approach small children, should not pursue interaction with anyone who doesn't appear to want to engage with Sparky, and should not force Sparky on anyone.
- The costume becomes hot to the wearer after a very short period. Several cooling options are available from the costume manufacturers. Limit appearances to 15-20 minute segments to minimize personal discomfort.

### CARE AND MAINTENANCE

After each appearance, check the costume for needed repairs or cleaning. Note this on the outside of the storage box for immediate follow-up by the owner of the costume.

The Sparky costume is not used unless it is clean, complete, and in good repair. Ideally, the costume (turnout gear and gloves/paws) should be dry-cleaned. Laundering is permitted according to the manufacturer's specifications. If the suit is not cleaned after several hours of use, it will begin to smell and cause deterioration that will shorten the life expectancy. It's best to store the costume outside of the carrying case, as well as storing the case with the lid off.

### SECURITY

Protect the Sparky costume from theft or vandalism to eliminate unauthorized use, which may result in bad publicity and harm to the integrity of Sparky as a symbol of fire safety.

- Keep the costume under lock-and-key when it is not in use.
- Use a sign-in/sign-out system to control costume use.
- Mark the costume box to say: "Warning: Unauthorized use or possession of this costume is not permitted."
- Immediately report theft of costume to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and request prompt action to assure recovery.
- When it is determined by the owner that the costume is no longer fit to wear and must be disposed of, the suit shall be rendered unrecognizable as a Sparky costume by cutting or tearing all components.

### SPARKY'S MESSAGES

- Have a family home fire escape plan.
- Know two ways out of every room.
- Have a meeting place outside the home.
- Practice your home fire escape plan at least twice a year.
- Make sure your home has a smoke alarm on each level (including the basement), outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms. When one sounds, they will all sound.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.

Sparky may also be used to support messages from NFPA programs including:

Learn Not to Burn® program

Remembering When™: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults

10-, 30-, and 60-minute lesson plans

Community toolkits



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LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER.™