Outdoor Fire Designs
"Add A Little Fire To Your Life"

Frequently Asked Questions

What makes your Remote Control Fire System better than the rest?

Igniter – the igniter is the weak link in most other Remote Fire Systems. Direct Spark Igniters, like the kind you find on most kitchen stoves – the ones that go "Tick, tick, tick" before they light – are found on most other systems. Direct Spark Igniters don't work well outside because any residue from dirt or moisture that collects on the electrodes weakens the spark. A weak spark equates to no ignition. We use a Hot Surface Igniter – very much like a glow plug. This is the same igniter that is used in Pool/Spa Gas Heaters. It is not susceptible to anything found outside. For this reason, you will get years of worry free dependability without having to clean any electrodes at any time like you do on a Direct Spark Ignition System.

Small Size – the small size of our Remote Fire System makes it easy to install almost anywhere. Measuring a mere 5 ¾' x 4 ½" x 3 ¾" enables you to install in the shallowest of bowls or the narrowest of troughs (for straight burner bar applications)

Simple Installation – Just one gas line connection and two low voltage wire connections and our Remote System is ready to go! Our system does not require a myriad of wires to make it work – you can even use Cat 3 telephone wire from the Equipment Pad to our modules and it will work just fine!

Waterproof – our valve/electronic assembly is housed in a heavy gauge aluminum enclosure that is waterproof. Thought not meant to be submerged – it will stand up to heavy rains, splashing and high humidity climates.

Is your Remote Control Fire Module UL Approved?

No. Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) only approves appliances that require 50 volts or more of electrical power to operate. Since our Module operates on 24 volts – it does not need UL Approval.

Is your Remote Control Fire Module Certified?

Yes. Our Remote Control Fire Module has the following Certifications:

IAS Design Certified by the American Gas Association. C2030017
ANS Z21.20, Automatic Ignition Systems
ANS Z21.35CAN1-6.8, Gas Filters
ANS Z21.78, Combination Gas Controls

Can I power your RC Module through an Automated Pool Controller such as an Aqualink?

Yes. Most of our installations have involved an Aqualink or similar system. The key is to bring your 110v off of one of the relays (Load terminal) to power the 24v transformer that comes in our kit. If there are only two fire features to power and they are both being turned on by one button on the handheld remote, there is usually enough room inside the Aqualink enclosure to locate the transformer there (the transformers are small in size). If you need more than one transformer, you may need to put a J-box next to the Aqualink and run your 110v line through conduit over to it to power the transformers inside the J-box.

If I don't have an Aqualink or some similar system – how do I control your RC Module?

Another way to control our system is through 'other' electronic remote systems such as X-10. We offer the X-10 components through our website.

Are you developing new products for outdoor use?

Yes. We are constantly coming up with ideas to help add decorative fire features for use outdoors. We are currently developing and perfecting Fire in Water.

Do you have an RC Module for use in Fire/Water Bowls?

The answer to this is yes and no. Even though our current Remote Control Module is waterproof it, is not intended to be submerged inside a bowl full of water such as is seen with some Fire/Water Bowls. We can give the image of Fire coming out of water by having a bowl that contains the RCM placed inside of another water feature. (As in the Fire/water feature in our gallery) We will have actual fire in water coming out very soon as mentioned in the question above.

Can you use one RC Fire Module to power two separate Fire Features?

No, not normally unless the fire rings or burner bars are touching each other.   If you have a rectangular firepit requiring more than one fire ring (by the way we do offer round, square and rectangular fire rings) you can control the fire rings using just one RC Module. If you go to the link on our website, "Instructional Tools" and click on the pdf document "RC Module Plumbing when more than One Fire Ring", you will see how to do this. The key to this working is to make sure the fire rings are either touching each other or at least very close to one another so that the flame will 'jump' from one ring to the other when lit.

Can you use one 24v Transformer to power more than one RC Module?

Yes. We have powered up to 3 Remote Control Modules using one 24v transformer?

Do I need to install a Manual Shutoff for the gas if using your system?

Yes. National Code requires that a Manual Shutoff for the gas be installed when using Electronic Ignition. The location of the Manual Shutoff varies depending on what your Building Department requires. There are two good reasons to install a Manual Shutoff. First, it does not happen often but it is possible the valve inside our Remote Control Module could stick "open" after being lit. In the event this occurs, the only way to shut the flow of gas off is through the Manual Shutoff. Second, the Manual Shutoff is the best way to adjust the flame height of the fire feature. By turning the Manual Shutoff toward "off", you consequently lower the flame.

Will your system work in windy conditions?

Yes. Through our own experience installing and working with our system we have found that if installed in accordance with our installation manual – your fire features will not only light but also STAY lit in very windy conditions. Where we are located in Nevada, we tested our system in 60 mph winds and even though the flame was dancing back and forth quite a bit – the unit not only lit, it stayed lit.

What happens if the flame IS blown out?

Our system is a Continuous Relight system. If the flame is blown out, the RC Module will attempt to relight itself. If the flame is blown out 4 times, the system will shut itself down. At this point, the power to the RC Module needs to be cycled off and then back on to start the ignition sequence over as described at the beginning of this paragraph.

Can you control your system through a spa side switch?

Yes – but only if the spa side switch is connected to an Aqualink or some other Automated Pool Controller. We have done installs where fire features next to the spa are controlled by BOTH the handheld Remote Control that comes with the Automated Pool Controller AND the spa side switches. The control of the fire feature is exactly like a 3 way light switch in a house. You can turn the fire on by the spa from inside the house and then you can turn it off via the spa side switch once you are in the spa. The key is in the programming of the Remote Control that comes with the Automated Pool Controller.

Do you offer custom-made burner bars?

Yes. We offer custom made burner bars in black steel, galvanized steel and stainless steel. If you fax or email us a rough sketch with dimensions we will email you a quote with prices for all 3 materials mentioned above.

Do you offer Free Shipping?

EXCEPT ON ALL BOWL ORDERS, for qualified purchases (shipping specials vary) – Ground UPS shipping is free. If you would like expedited shipping you only pay for the difference in cost between the expedited shipping and the ground shipping rate to your location.

What forms of payment do you accept?

We accept Visa, MasterCard, American express, and discover credit cards, we also accept paypal, money orders and checks. In the event you are paying by check, once the check has cleared through our bank, we will ship your order.

Do I need to put a drain hole in the bowls I install your system in?

YES! Even though our RC Module is housed in a waterproof enclosure it is not meant to either 'sit' or be 'submerged' in water. You only need to drill a hole ¼" or larger in size in either the bottom of your bowl or trough – but at least one drain hole should be made anywhere our RC Module is installed.

How long does it take for your system to light once the button is pushed?

The delay between pushing the button and when the fire lights is usually no more than 10 seconds. Typically it only takes about 5 seconds.

Which fire rings do you recommend for outdoor use?

We always recommend using Stainless Steel Fire Rings for outdoor use. The Black Steel rings will rust rather quickly and the first place on those rings that rust forms is in the outlet holes of the ring. Over time the rust on the outlet holes builds up to the point it actually restricts the flow of the gas through them and will decrease the size of the flame. For the added cost of the Stainless Steel rings you avoid having to replace your Black Steel ring every year or two (depends on the humidity in your area how long the Black Steel ring will last).

Does your system work with propane?

Yes. We can convert your RC Module for use with propane prior to shipping it to you. You just need to indicate it is for propane at the time you place your order. Every Module we convert for propane use has a label on it indicating it has been converted for use with propane.

Do you have Resources available to help with the install of your system?

Yes. If you log onto our "Contractors Only" part of the website you will see a link in the Header Bar for "Instructional Tools" At the moment we only have pdf files available for download. In the near future we will be adding instructional videos for download as well.

How many BTU's does your RC Module supply?

Our normal RC Module will supply 204,000 BTU/hr. More than enough for rings up to 30" in diameter (36" if using our high capacity 36" ring). If you need more BTUs, we can build an RC Module for you that will supply 475,000 BTU/hr. The size of the enclosure for the larger gas output is identical to the size of the enclosure for our normal RC Module – the only difference you will notice is the inlet and outlet size is ¾" versus the ½" openings for the normal RC Module. This is a special order item with an add-on charge to the RC Module kit and takes 2 weeks to deliver.

Do you offer an RC Module that supplies more than 200k BTU/hr?

Yes. We offer an RC Module with an output of 475,000 BTU/hr. The size of the enclosure for this high capacity module is identical to the size of our normal RC Module – the only difference you will notice is the inlet and outlet size is ¾" versus the ½" openings for the normal RC Module. This is a special order item with an add-on charge to the RC Module kit and takes 2 weeks to deliver.

How do I control one Fire Feature with one button and another Fire Feature with a different button?

In order to control fire features in this way you will need to use more than one relay from inside the Automated Pool Controller such as an Aqualink.

Troubleshooting

I installed your system, turned it on and nothing happened

A majority of the time, when this occurs it is due to incorrect wiring or the absence of electrical power (GFI breaker needs to be reset possibly). Every 24v Transformer and RC Module we ship is bench tested just before it is placed in a box for shipping so though it is possible, it is very unlikely those two electrical components are faulty. Look closely at the pilot igniter to ensure the center 'glow plug' piece is intact (see page 2 of the Install Instructions to figure out which piece is the 'glow plug'). If the glow plug is in intact and is not glowing red hot immediately after power is applied, use a multimeter on the wires leading to the Remote Control Module to ensure you have at least 24v AC power at the Module. If no power, check all electrical connections between the Remote Control Module and your electrical power source. If there is power, call our toll free number to request a new unit.

The glow plug on the igniter is turning orange but the pilot is not lighting

If a new gas line was installed to power your fire feature it is VERY important you purge the gas line PRIOR to installing the Remote Control Module. If you forgot to purge the gas line it could take up to 30 attempts to light the fire feature using the Remote Control Module in order to purge the air from the gas line before it finally lights. If the gas line has been purged and it still won't light, call our toll free number to request a new unit.

The fire feature is turning on just fine but it's only staying lit for a short time.

The most sensitive part to our RC Module is the flame sensor rod. If the flame sensor rod is not engulfed in flame while the fire feature is on, it will cause the Module to shut down and then relight. Refer to the diagram on Page 2 of the Installation Instructions for proper 'positioning' of the flame sensor in relation to the hole in the side of the fire ring. Also, the placement of Lava Rock or Fireglass on top of the Pilot burner will affect the flame sensor as well. Ensure that there is adequate air space around the Pilot burner to allow the flame to burn freely in this area. Never completely cover the Pilot Burner with either Lava Rock or Fireglass.

What is the best way to purge air from a new gas line?

The best way to purge the air from a gas line is to turn the manual gas valve on at the fire feature and let it flow until you smell gas. Then you can install the RC Module. By purging the gas line you will only have to wait about 10 seconds after you initiate ignition to have the fire turn on.

How long does it take to purge the air from a new gas line?

If you purge the gas line as directed in the previous paragraph it should take less than a minute to purge it. If you forget to purge it as described above and try to purge it by turning the RC Module on and off repeatedly it could take up to 30 attempts before it finally lights. The time it takes to purge a gas line is heavily dependent upon the length and size of the gas line.