



FIREWORKS SAFETY

Every year people are taken to hospital emergency rooms in the United States because of injuries from fireworks. So what can you do to enjoy the Fourth of July and still stay safe? Going to public fireworks displays is the best approach. Not only are these displays bigger and brighter (the federal government bans the sale of the largest fireworks to the public), but many states have laws that don't allow people to buy or use fireworks. Before using fireworks, find out what the laws are in your area. In the State of Florida, consumer use of fireworks by the public is illegal. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) provides more information about state and federal regulations on its website.

Facts & figures

- In 2004, fireworks started an estimated 1,600 structure fires and 600 vehicle fires which were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in 20 civilian injuries and \$21 million in direct property damage.
- In 2003, 100 people were killed in a Rhode Island night club fire ignited by the indoor use of pyrotechnics in a small, crowded room with wall linings that promoted rapid flame spread. The facility had no sprinkler protection.
- In 2005, 10,800 people were treated at hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries. More than half (54%) of 2005 fireworks injuries were burns. Contusions and lacerations were second (29%), and were twice as common as burns when the injury was to any part of the head or face, including the eyes. Hands or fingers were the part of the body injured in 30% of the incidents. In 24% of the cases, the eye was involved; other parts of the face or head accounted for 20% of the injuries.
- The highest risks of fireworks injury are to school-age children. In 2005, nearly half of the people injured by fireworks were under the age of 15. The highest injury rate relative to population was for ages 10-14 with nearly 3 times the risk of the entire population.
- Males accounted for nearly 7 out of every 10 (69%) fireworks injuries.
- On Independence Day in a typical year, more U.S. fires are reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires.
- Don't allow young children to operate fireworks, even sparklers.
- Follow all the directions on the label closely.
- Always use fireworks outside with a bucket of water or hose nearby. Keep fireworks away from dry leaves and other materials that can easily catch on fire.
- Light one firework at a time. Keep the fireworks being lit well away from unlit fireworks.
- Point fireworks away from people. If you are lighting fireworks, wear eye protection and don't lean over the firework.

- If a firework doesn't seem to work, don't go over to it or attempt to relight it. Stand back for a while. If you can reach it with a hose or bucket without getting too close, douse it with water.
- Soak all fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them away.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- If someone gets an eye injury from fireworks, don't rub the eye or attempt to wash it out. Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room. It could make the difference between saving a person's sight and permanent blindness.

