



FIREWORKS SAFETY

Fireworks are a traditional part of our celebration of Independence Day on July 4th. For many of us, the 4th of July just isn't complete without sparklers and the chorus of ooh's and aah's when it finally gets dark and the big show begins.

But the celebration is ruined when careless and inappropriate use of fireworks results in injury. According to the US Consumer Products Safety Commission, 8500 people in the US are treated each year for fireworks-related injuries. Seven out of every 100 people injured from fireworks have to be hospitalized. The estimated annual cost of fireworks-related injuries in the US: \$100 million.

Who gets hurt?

- Those most frequently injured by fireworks are boys aged 10 to 14 years old
- More than 40% of those injured are children younger than 14
- The most frequently and most seriously injured are active participants in fireworks related activities, not bystanders and audiences

What kinds of injuries occur?

- Fireworks-related injuries most frequently involve hands and fingers: 38%, and eyes 19%
- About half of the injuries are burns, especially to the face, hand, wrist, or arm
- Fireworks can be life-threatening. In 1997, seven people were killed from fireworks-related injuries. Fireworks can also cause life-threatening residential fires

Which kinds of fireworks are the most dangerous?

- About two thirds of fireworks injuries are from backyard, (class C) fireworks like firecrackers, bottle rockets, Roman candles, fountains, and sparklers, that are legal in many states
- Fireworks-related injuries are most commonly associated with firecrackers (51%), bottle rockets (12%), and sparklers (7%)
- The most severe injuries are typically caused by rockets, cherry bombs and M-80s (Class B), which are federally banned from public sale
- Illegal firecrackers cause 29% of all firecracker injuries

Fireworks Safety Tips

The best way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to the trained professionals. But for those who participate, the US Consumer Products Safety Commission and the National Council on Fireworks Safety have issued these tips.

- Do not let children under 14 use fireworks and supervise older children
- Only buy from reliable fireworks sellers; read and follow all the warnings and instructions
- Use fireworks outdoors only; keep them away from houses and flammable materials
- Have a bucket of water nearby
- Do NOT try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them in water and throw them away

- Be sure other people are a safe distance away before lighting fireworks
- Never ignite fireworks in a container -- especially glass or metal
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place according to their specific storage instructions
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks
- Do not wear loose clothing near a fire or while using fireworks
- *Rockets* should be launched from a rocket launcher not a bottle
- *Sparklers* need to be handled carefully too: they burn at more than 1000 degrees F. Light them one at a time at arm's length. Always wear gloves while holding a sparkler, and never give one to a child under 5 years of age
- Educate children (of all ages) about the dangers of fireworks and teach them to practice safety at all times

Information Provided by:

US Consumer Products Safety Commission

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control