

Be Fire Safe about Fireworks this July 4th

For many Americans, fireworks have become a way of life during the holidays – beautifully colored sparks flying through the air in concert with loud rumbling explosions. As exciting as this may seem, people often forget that they are playing with explosives: dangerous chemicals and combustibles that can destroy property and injure people. These deceptively simple objects explode, throw hot sparks through the air, and can often reach temperatures hotter than 1,200 degrees.

As reported by the National Fire Protection Association, six states ban the use of fireworks by consumers (AZ, DE, MA, NJ, NY, and RI). The other 44 states and the District of Columbia permit limited use of consumer fireworks. Nationally, fireworks have caused millions of dollars in property loss, thousands of injuries and deaths. **In South Carolina, during 2005, 165 fireworks-related fire incidents were reported, resulting in approximately \$120,000 loss.** “The safest way to enjoy fireworks is by letting the professionals handle the explosives, and attend a public fireworks display,” advises **John Reich, Deputy Director for LLR’s Division of Fire and Life Safety.** If you plan to shoot your own fireworks, pay particular attention to safety tips to help reduce the chances of a destructive fire and/or injury:

- Purchase fireworks only from a licensed & approved dealer.
- Read and follow the directions on fireworks packages.
- Make sure adults supervise all use of fireworks. Young children should not play with fireworks. Even sparklers can cause a serious burn injury.
- Do not point or throw fireworks at people.
- Use fireworks in an open area away from dry grass and other flammable materials. Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies.
- Light fireworks one at a time. Do not try to re-ignite fireworks. Soak fireworks that did not ignite with water. Do not attempt to repair broken fireworks.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place. Keep fireworks out of your pockets.

Remember, fireworks may be dangerous if used incorrectly.
Have a safe Independence Day celebration.