

Firework Safety



A Celebration withOUT Fireworks

NON-PROFIT GROUP ENCOURAGES AMERICANS TO CELEBRATE BY NOT USING FIREWORKS

Every year, many Americans celebrate Independence Day with food, get-togethers and sometimes, fireworks. But no matter what kind of fireworks are used, they are extremely dangerous. According to the U.S. Eye Injury Registry, bystanders are more often injured by fireworks than operators themselves.

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that 6,500 people were treated in emergency rooms across the country due to accidents caused by fireworks during the 4th of July weekend, according to the latest data from 2005.
- There were 10,800 firework-related injuries for the entire year, an increase of 1,400 injuries from 2004.
- 45 percent of all fireworks injuries are to those aged 15 and younger.
- Most injuries are to the hands and fingers, but 1,600 were eye injuries, including contusions and lacerations, debris in the eye and burns. Some injuries result in permanent vision loss.

Which fireworks are “safe”? NONE

- Even sparklers can burn up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit
- In 2005, there were 500 children under the age of 5 that were hurt by sparklers.
- Sparklers accounted for half of all fireworks injuries to children in that age group.

Prevent Blindness America (PBA) the nation's oldest eye health and safety organization, urges everyone to leave fireworks to professionals. PBA offers tips to prevent fireworks-related injuries:

- Do not purchase, use or store fireworks.
- Be aware that even sparklers are dangerous and cause one half of fireworks injuries in children 5 and younger.
- Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators.**
- Support legislation that bans the importation, general sale and indiscriminate usage of fireworks by children and adults.



Fireworks History and Trivia

- New Castle, Pennsylvania, home to the nationally recognized display companies, Zambelli Internationale and Pyrotechnico, proclaims itself to be the "Fireworks capital of America."
- It is believed that gunpowder was discovered by a Chinese alchemist who mixed sulphur and salt peter over a fire.
- Settlers brought fireworks to the U.S. during 1600s.
- The first Independence Day fireworks celebration was in 1776, and was memorialized by then future President John Adams as follows: "The day (Independence Day) will be the most memorable in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival...it ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade...bonfires and illuminations (fireworks) from one end of this continent to the other, from this day forward forevermore."
- In today's public display shows, computers are used to control the launching of the fireworks and the synchronization of the aerial bursts with music.
- 30 years ago professional fireworks shows lasted on average over an hour, in comparison to today's shows which last approximately 20 minutes.
- The most dangerous fireworks-related tragedy in the world occurred on May 16, 1770, during the marriage of King Louis XVI to Maria Antoinette. After the celebratory fireworks show, there was a stampede where approximately 800 people were killed.
- Legend has it that Marco Polo brought this new accidental invention to the West from one of his many trips to China and other eastern countries.



Source: Prevent Blindness America and National Fire Protection Association



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