



pennsylvania
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



MONTHLY
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FIREWORKS SAFETY

Fireworks are synonymous with our celebration of Independence Day. Yet, the thrill of fireworks can also bring pain. 230 people on average go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the month around the July 4th holiday.

In 2014, the Consumer Products Safety Commission conducted a study of fireworks injuries from June 20 through July 20. The study showed that 230 people on average go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the month around the July 4th holiday. 67 percent of these fireworks injuries in 2014 occurred during the month surrounding July 4th. Nine people died due to eight fireworks-related incidents. In at least two incidents, the victims were not the users

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According to Prevent Blindness (www.preventblindness.org):



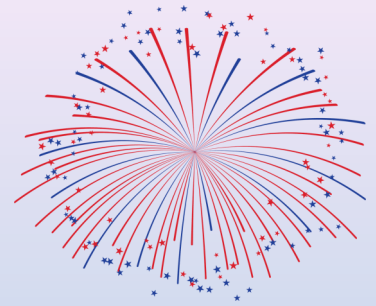
- Firework devices were involved in an estimated 10,500 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2014 (the latest year for which data is available).
- An estimated 7,000 injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms during the one-month period (June 20–July 20) surrounding the Fourth of July.
- 19 percent, or 1,200, of those injuries were to the eyes.
- Sparklers accounted for 1,400 injuries, while firecrackers accounted for 1,400 and bottle rockets injured 100.
- Males accounted for 74 percent of fireworks injuries.
- 40% of fireworks injuries were to children under age 15.
- For children under 5 years old, sparklers accounted for the most estimated injuries.
- Data from the U.S. Eye Injury Registry (<http://www.useir.org>) shows that bystanders are more often injured by fireworks than operators themselves.
- Contusions, lacerations, and foreign bodies were the most common injuries to eyes.

Additionally, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) (www.nfpa.org), fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires per year, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires, and 16,900 outside and other fires. These fires caused an average of three deaths, 40 civilian injuries, and an average of \$43 million in direct property damage.



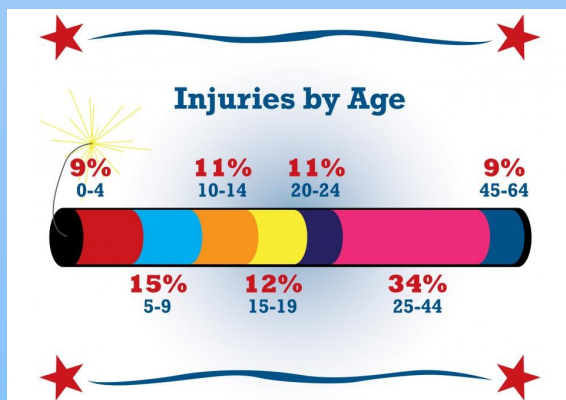
FIRWORKS SAFETY TIPS

- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
- Know your fireworks; read the cautionary labels and performance descriptions before igniting.
- A responsible adult should supervise all firework activities. Never give fireworks to children.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Save your alcohol for after the show.
- Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
- Light one firework at a time and then quickly move away.
- Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from buildings and vehicles.
- Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
- Always have a bucket of water, a water hose or fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket or shoot them into metal or glass containers.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and place in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations prohibit the possession and transportation of fireworks in your checked baggage or carry-on luggage.
- Report illegal explosives, like M-80s and quarter sticks, to the fire or police department.



And let's not forget the safety of our pets!

- Don't bring your pets to a fireworks display.
- If fireworks are being used near your home, put your pet in a safe interior room to avoid exposure to the sound.
- Make sure your pet has an identification tag in case it runs off during a fireworks display.
- Never shoot fireworks of any kind (consumer fireworks, sparklers, fountains, etc.) near pets.



FIREWORKS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I use fireworks in Pennsylvania? State law prohibits the use of Consumer and Display Fireworks in Pennsylvania without a permit. Items defined as “ground and hand-held sparkling devices”, “novelties” and “toy caps” are not currently regulated by State Law; therefore, their sale and use are permissible. These “non-fireworks” are the only types allowed to be sold from tents, stands, convenience stores, retail establishments, and other various outlets not licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Can I buy regular fireworks (not sparklers or novelty items) under any conditions? This answer depends on whether or not you are a Pennsylvania Resident.

- **Pennsylvania residents:** May purchase Consumer Fireworks only with a display permit issued by a municipality.
- **Non-residents:** An amendment to the Fireworks Law, effective November 30, 2004, makes it legal, upon proof of out-of-state residency status, to purchase Consumer Fireworks from a facility licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture provided the Consumer Fireworks are transported directly out of state by the seller or purchaser.

How do I get a permit for a fireworks display? The Commonwealth does not issue permits for firework displays and does not oversee the issuance of permits by the municipalities. Contact your local municipality for further information.

Any business entity that performs, provides, or supervises fireworks displays or exhibitions, for profit, must register annually with the Office of Attorney General. For more information, contact the Office of Attorney General, Criminal Law Division, at (717) 787-3391.

Who enforces the Fireworks Law? Any Law Enforcement Officer, having jurisdiction, may make an arrest and confiscate fireworks under the Fireworks Law. To report a violation of the Fireworks Law, contact the Police Department servicing your area.

What else should I know about fireworks? Cherry bombs, M-80s, M-100s, silver salutes and other illegal fireworks are all extremely dangerous. In addition, fireworks constructed from mail order kits are illegal and dangerous to assemble or use. Never attempt to make your own fireworks or tamper with fireworks.

For further information:

[Pennsylvania Fireworks Law](http://www.psp.pa.gov/public-safety/Documents/Title_35_Chapter_13A_Fireworks_and_Explosives.pdf) (http://www.psp.pa.gov/public-safety/Documents/Title_35_Chapter_13A_Fireworks_and_Explosives.pdf)

U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms – [Federal Explosive and Firework regulations](https://www.atf.gov/explosives/fireworks-safety-and-security) (<https://www.atf.gov/explosives/fireworks-safety-and-security>)

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – [Regulations and Licensing of Consumer Fireworks Retail Facilities](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/RideMeasurement/Pages/Consumer-Fireworks-.aspx) (<http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/RideMeasurement/Pages/Consumer-Fireworks-.aspx>)



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