



# FIREWORKS SAFETY



Everyone enjoys fireworks, which are frequent at summer time events and during the upcoming Fourth of July holiday. It's a time for family fun, but before your family celebrates, make sure everyone knows about fireworks safety. If not handled properly, fireworks can cause burns and eye injuries in kids and adults. In 2007, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,800 people for fireworks related injuries; 56% of 2007 emergency room fireworks-related injuries were to the extremities and 36% were to the head.

The best way to protect your family is not to use any fireworks at home — period. Attend public fireworks displays, and leave the lighting to the professionals. Be aware that lighting fireworks at home isn't even legal in many areas, so if you still want to use them at home, be sure to check with your local police department first. If they're legal where you live, keep these safety tips in mind:



- Always read and follow label directions. Only use fireworks as intended. Don't try to alter them or combine them and never try to make your own.
- Alcohol and fireworks DO NOT MIX!
- Kids should never play with fireworks. And things like firecrackers, rockets, and sparklers are just too dangerous. If you give kids sparklers, make sure they keep them outside and away from the face, clothing, and hair. **Sparklers can reach 1,800 °F (982 °C) — hot enough to melt gold.**
- Buy only legal fireworks (legal fireworks have a label with the manufacturer's name and directions; illegal ones are unlabeled), and store them in a cool, dry place. Illegal fireworks usually go by the names M-80, M100, blockbuster, or quarterpounder. These explosives were banned in 1966, but still account for many fireworks injuries.
  - Always use fireworks outside and have a bucket of water and a hose nearby in case of accidents.
  - Light one firework at a time (not in glass or metal containers), and never relight a dud; wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
  - If necessary, store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Dispose of fireworks properly by soaking them in water and then disposing of them in your trashcan.
- Steer clear of others — fireworks have been known to backfire or shoot off in the wrong direction. Never throw or point fireworks at someone, even in jest.
- Don't hold fireworks in your hand or have any part of your body over them while lighting. Wear some sort of eye protection, and avoid carrying fireworks in your pocket — the friction could set them off.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials. The National Fire Protection Association estimates that local fire departments respond to more 50,000 [fires](#) caused by fireworks each year.
- Soak all fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them in the trash can.
- Think about your pet. Animals have sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened or stressed on the Fourth of July. Keep pets indoors to reduce the risk that they'll run loose or get injured.



Fireworks are meant to be enjoyed, but you'll enjoy them much more knowing your family is safe. Take extra precautions this Fourth of July and your holiday will be a blast!

Sources:  
<http://www.fireworksafety.com/>  
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