



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Fireworks increase the risk of injury and fire**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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According to a report published by the National Fire Protection Association, although the Fourth of July holiday is only one day, it is the time when the most U.S. fires are reported, with fireworks accounting for half of those fires. Additionally, fireworks are the riskiest consumer product for the amount of time they are in use.

In 2006, 9,200 fireworks-related injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. Forty-nine percent of the emergency room fireworks-related injuries were to the extremities and 46 percent were to the head. Of those injuries to the extremities, 37 percent were to the hands or fingers. Fifty-five percent of the 2006 fireworks injuries were burns, while 30 percent were contusions and lacerations.

“People need to understand that fireworks can be extremely dangerous if they are not used correctly,” said Samille Jackson, health educator with the Injury Division at the Alabama Department of Public Health. “Adults should be very careful when using fireworks and children should not use them at all.”

Children are at greater risk of being injured by fireworks. One-third of the people injured by fireworks were under the age of 15. The risk of injury by fireworks was two-and-a-half times as high for children ages 10-14 compared to the general population. Males accounted for 75 percent of fireworks injuries in 2006.

Despite popular belief, injuries are not only occurring to individuals using homemade or illegal devices. People are sustaining injuries and even being killed as a result of using, manufacturing, transporting and storing federally regulated fireworks. In 2006, 90 percent of the emergency room fireworks injuries involved fireworks that federal regulations permit consumers to use. Sparklers, fountains, and novelties alone accounted for 28 percent of the emergency room fireworks injuries.

“The best way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to the trained professionals,” said Jackson. “Professionals are the ones most capable of using fireworks properly.”

For those who do decide to use fireworks this Fourth of July holiday, we recommend the following safety tips.

- Do not let children under 14 years of age use fireworks.
- Supervise individuals under age 18.
- 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 at a safe distance away before lighting fireworks.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container – especially a glass or metal one.
- 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.
- There are no “safe and sane” fireworks. Fireworks and sparklers are designed to explode or throw off showers of hot sparks at temperatures that may exceed 1200 °F.
- Light sparklers 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.

For more information about fire safety, please visit the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Web site at [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention).