

National Fireworks Safety Awareness

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From small towns to big cities, summer in the United States is synonymous with barbecues, swimming pools, and fireworks. Though enjoyable and a tradition for many families, fireworks are best left to the professionals. Nevertheless, we understand that many July 4th celebrations will be cancelled due to COVID-19 and that there will be an increase in folks that decide to celebrate with fireworks at home.

Who is most at risk?

In June 2019, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) published its 2018 Fireworks Annual Report. According to the report, fireworks caused five (5) deaths and an estimated 9,100 injuries in fiscal year 2018. An estimated 62% (5,600) of which occurred between June 22, 2018 and July 22, 2018. The CPSC notes that there have been 121 reported fireworks-related deaths between 2003 and 2018 for an average of 7.56 deaths per year.

Children younger than 15 years of age accounted for 36% of injuries while nearly half of the estimated emergency department visits were for individuals younger than 20 years old. Sadly, children aged 10-14 had the highest estimated rate of emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries (5.2 injuries per 100,000 people).

What type of fireworks were most dangerous?

While all fireworks are dangerous, the CPSC report noted that there were an estimated 500 emergency department-treated injuries associated with sparklers, 200 with bottle rockets, and 1,000 with firecrackers. An estimated 54% of injuries were associated with firecrackers for which there was no specific information.

While sparklers are considered safe for children the National Safety Council advises that sparklers are a lot more dangerous than people realize. For example, sparklers burn at 2,000 degrees – a temperature hot enough to burn some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. The National Fire Protection Association claims that sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries.

What are common injuries?

As expected, 44% of the estimated emergency department-treated injuries were burns. The burns were most commonly found on hands, fingers, and arms. The parts of the body most often injured were hands and fingers (28%); legs (24%); eyes (19%); head, face, and ears (15%), and arms (4%).

Safety Recommendations

- DO NOT allow young children to play with fireworks, including sparklers.
- Older children should be permitted to use fireworks only under direct adult supervision and should not be allowed to run or horseplay.
- Set off fireworks in a clear area, away from leaves or debris, and keep a bucket of water nearby.
- If a firework fails to light, or is a "dud," DO NOT attempt to relight. Soak it in water and dispose of it in your garbage.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Check instructions and comply with all indications for use.
- Observe all federal, state, and local laws and regulations on the purchase and use of fireworks.
- DO NOT have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- DO NOT experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Please be mindful that fireworks you have purchased may have been recalled. If that occurs, please do not use the fireworks and dispose of said fireworks immediately.

Please remember that all fireworks are dangerous and should be left to professionals for your safe enjoyment. If you decide to partake in a fireworks celebration with your family, please use extreme caution as recommended above. From our family to yours, please safely enjoy the warm weather, barbecues, and summer celebratory traditions all summer long.

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Practice Areas

Catastrophic Personal Injury