



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: July 1, 2015

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State Fire Marshal: Legal Fireworks Can Have Lethal Results

Baton Rouge, LA – Barbeques, family gatherings, and fireworks are entrenched staples of American celebratory festivities: especially when it comes to observing our nation's birth on Independence Day.

However, while the first two are usually laden with great food and wonderful people, the improper and/or illegal use of fireworks can easily spoil it all...in devastating fashion.

The State Fire Marshal's Office wishes to remind the thousands of Louisianans who plan to use fireworks throughout the state this weekend that fireworks can cause catastrophic damage as well as unnecessary deaths, if not handled with great care.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that in 2011 over 17,000 reported fires, which included nearly 2,000 vehicles and structures, were directly related to fireworks. In addition, the resulting fires caused injuries to dozens of people and inflicted millions of dollars in property damage. In 2013, over 11,000 people were treated and/or hospitalized for fireworks-related injuries to the hands, feet and head.

Sadly, the majority of those most at risk for injury due to firework are children under the age of five. Likewise, children ages 10 – 14 are the second group most susceptible to injuries.

For those planning to attend fireworks presented in a large public venue, the State Fire Marshal's Office advises to make sure that they are authorized public displays, which require the services of licensed pyrotechnic operators.

And, while there is no such thing as a "safe firework," the National Council on Fireworks Safety suggests the following steps to help ensure an injury-free Fourth of July:

- 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 and charged water hose 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.
- 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.

For more information on fireworks safety, please visit our website at www.lasfm.org, or the websites of the National Fire Protection Association (<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/holidays/fireworks>), and the National Council on Fireworks Safety (<http://www.fireworkssafety.org/safety-tips>).

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