



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



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For Immediate Release:

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State Fire Marshal Urges Citizens to Celebrate July 4th Safely

The South Carolina State Fire Marshal's Office encourages you to enjoy the July 4th holiday by watching a licensed public fireworks display. But if you plan to handle consumer fireworks yourself, the Office reminds you to use extreme caution.

"Celebrating our nation's birthday is important, but we want everyone to do it safely," State Fire Marshal Shane Ray said. "Our office encourages families, as well as visitors to our state, to support local communities by attending licensed public fireworks displays."

During the 2013 Fourth of July season, the State Fire Marshal's Office approved 100 licensed public fireworks displays around the state.

"These public events bring the community together in a fun way to celebrate our country's independence," Ray said. "After sundown on Thursday, July 4, the evening sky in our state will be full of fireworks. Just for that one night during the July 4th holiday season, we have approved 51 commercial outdoor displays in 21 different counties."

For the sale of consumer fireworks, the State Fire Marshal's office permitted almost 700 temporary consumer fireworks stands across the state. By law, the minimum age to purchase consumer fireworks is 16 years old, and bottle rockets less than one-half inch in diameter and three inches in length are considered "small bottle rockets" and are illegal for retail sale and use.

"In South Carolina, it is sometimes a tradition to buy and shoot fireworks with family and friends," he said. "However, improperly used fireworks are potentially dangerous and unpredictable - even in the safety of your own backyard."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), far more fires are reported in the U.S. on a typical Independence Day than on any other day of the year. Fireworks account for two out of five of the fires, more than any other cause.

The NFPA also reports that nationally in 2010, fires resulted in an estimated eight deaths, 60 injuries and more than \$35 million in direct property damage.

For a list of public firework displays or more information about fireworks safety, visit www.scfiremarshal.llronline.com.

The State Fire Marshal's Office and the S.C. Fire Academy make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.