

July Safety Theme: Fireworks Have Become a Way to Celebrate During the July 4th Holidays...It's Our Responsibility to Celebrate Safely

With the excitement of loud explosions and beautifully colored sparks flying through the air, people often forget that fireworks may contain dangerous chemicals and combustibles that can destroy property and injure people. This July 4th, State Fire Marshal John Reich encourages everyone to be fire smart about fireworks.

In 2007, South Carolina fire departments reported 152 incidents involving fireworks, with more than \$75,000 in losses reported.

"The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public fireworks display," Reich said.

Some states ban the use of fireworks by consumers, while other states permit some or all consumers to use fireworks. The South Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission join in advising you to observe applicable local and state laws. If the law allows you to shoot your own fireworks, pay particular attention to the following safety tips to help reduce the chances of a destructive fire and/or injury:

- Only purchase fireworks from a licensed dealer that sells certified fireworks.
- Avoid buying fireworks that come in brown paper packaging, as this is often a sign that the fireworks were made for professional shows and could pose a danger to consumers.
- Never allow young children to play with fireworks.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activities. Parents often don't realize that sparklers have caused more injuries to children under age 5 than any other type of firework. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework device when lighting the fuse. Move back a safe distance immediately after lighting.
- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that did not fully function. Douse and soak with water and throw them away.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Light one item at a time, and then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
- Avoid the combination of alcohol, drugs and fireworks.