



Fireworks Safety

Fireworks can turn a joyful celebration into a painful memory when children and adults are injured while using fireworks. The National Fire Protection Association estimates that local fire departments respond to more 50,000 fires caused by fireworks each year. Following are some fireworks safety precautions for children and while lighting fireworks:

Children

- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Older children should only be permitted to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Do not allow any running or horseplay.
- Use extra caution with Sparklers. Although they are considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for children, Sparklers burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Sparklers can reach 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit (982 degrees Celsius) - hot enough to melt gold. Children cannot understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.
- Do not allow your child to pick up pieces of fireworks after an event. Some may still be ignited and can explode at any time.

Lighting Fireworks

- Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass, and flammable materials. Be sure to point fireworks away from homes.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies, for pouring on fireworks that do not go off, and before throwing them away.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks. Fireworks have been known to backfire or shoot off in the wrong direction.



Other Fireworks Safety

- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place. Check instructions for special storage directions.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Observe local laws. Buy only fireworks that are legal in Florida and the County you live (legal fireworks have a label with the manufacturer's name and directions; illegal ones are unlabeled), and store them in a cool, dry place. Illegal fireworks usually go by the names M-80, M100, blockbuster, or quarterpounder. These explosives were banned in 1966, but still account for many fireworks injuries.

- Think about your pet. Animals have sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened or stressed. Keep your pet indoors to reduce the risk that the pet will run loose or become injured.

Fireworks are meant to be enjoyed, but you will enjoy them much more knowing your family is safe. Take extra precautions and this holiday will be a blast!

Adapted from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.