



Leave Fireworks to the Pros

With the Fourth of July holiday just around the corner, many parents will buy fireworks to entertain their families. But fireworks in the hands of non-professionals can spell disaster. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that in 2004 about 9,600 people were treated in emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries, about 40% of them under age 15 and 83% under age 25. These injuries most often involved the hands (2200 injuries), the eyes (1400 injuries), or the head, face, and ear (1400 injuries). Past studies reveal that one in three fireworks-related eye injuries result in permanent blindness. Of all the fireworks-related injuries, only about 300 incidents involved public display fireworks.

About half of the estimated 700 injuries to children under age 5 were from sparklers. Injuries in the 5-14 year age group were equally divided between sparklers, novelty devices, rockets, and firecrackers. Bottle rockets generally account for half of all eye injuries and more than half of all permanent blindness cases. Some sparklers can reach temperatures as high as 1000 degrees F at the tip and can cause serious burns to the users or to bystanders by igniting clothing.

Fireworks and celebrations go together, especially during the Fourth of July – but fireworks can be very dangerous! That's why we strongly recommend the following safety tips:

- Leave Fireworks to the Professionals! Take your family to see one the several wonderful professional fireworks displays planned in our area.
- Teach children that fireworks are not toys. If they find fireworks they should not pick them up, and they should immediately seek help from an adult.
- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, and to stay away from others playing with fireworks

For more information, visit these web sites:

American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement: Fireworks-related Injuries to Children (2001, reaffirmed 2005)

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;108/1/190>

Consumer Product Safety Commission

www.cpsc.gov