

### Keep the Sparks in the Sky this Fourth of July

There is no doubt that fireworks are breath-taking, *but they can take more!* According to the CDC in 2006, eleven people died and an estimated 9,200 were treated for firework-related injuries. One out of every three injured were children under the age of 15. This is a problem that is becoming more ever-present in emergency rooms during the months of June and July. The injuries that are most commonly treated are burns to all body parts as well as contusions and lacerations to the head, eyes, and ears.

Even seemingly “safe” fireworks like sparklers which are often placed in the hands of small children are creating severe injuries. Did you know that sparklers burn at over 1000 degrees? That’s enough to melt gold...and little fingers! Their sparks and ash can ignite clothing and create burns.

Our primary message this season; leave it up to the professionals- it’s the best way for your family to be safe around fireworks. However, if you’re planning on purchasing fireworks, please make sure to take these precautions to prevent injuries.

1. Remove all flammables within 10-15 feet around the designated area.
2. Establish a well defined space into which only ONE person will enter to set up and light the fireworks. When one person is in charge, only one person has to evacuate the area after lighting the firework.
3. Children should not handle, play with, or light fireworks at all or for any reason.
4. Approach a firework after 45 seconds to one minute has passed since its last activity. A lit firework can have a problem causing part of the charge to explode after several seconds. You do not want to be near it when it does.
5. Never try to manufacture your own fireworks. Fireworks are assembled by professionals who fully understand what can and cannot be done to the ingredients. Not only is home manufacture of fireworks illegal, but it places you and your loved ones in needless danger.
6. Keep a bucket of water and/or a water hose within easy reach, and make sure the hose is long enough to reach 10 feet beyond the fireworks.
7. Always discharge fireworks outside, never inside a building. Aside from obvious structure fire concerns, the sharp pops and cracks that even small fireworks can produce may lead to long term hearing problems.
8. Never hold a lit firework in your hand. There are a number of clearly documented cases of fingers and hands being injured by fireworks that were used improperly.
9. When lighting fireworks, always move away slowly. Firework fuses are designed to give a little time between lighting and ignition, don’t run away as you could trip and fall.
10. Verify that the firework remains are 100% cold before placing them in the trash.
11. Never relight a dud. If the firework did not do anything, you must assume that it is still going to do something. If a firework fails to make any action whatsoever, it is advisable to wait 5 minutes before attempting to remove it.

For more information on firework safety, please contact Natalie Hughes at Bonita Springs Fire-Rescue at 239-949-6227.