

Simple ways to prevent fireworks injuries

July 3 2013



Best advice: Leave lighting to professionals and enjoy the spectacle.

(HealthDay)—Many Fourth of July fireworks-related injuries could be prevented with some common sense, according to experts who advise people to avoid using fireworks at home—even if they're legal.

"There's no such thing as completely safe [fireworks](#)," Dr. Andrew Sama, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians, said in an ACEP news release. "A few minutes of well-intentioned fun can result in lifelong disabilities."

Every Independence Day, an average of about 200 people end up in the emergency room with fireworks-related injuries, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Most of these injuries are burns and nearly half of these incidents involve people's hands and fingers. The CPSC notes that 34 percent of fireworks-related injuries

affect people's eyes, head, face and ears.

Although sparklers may seem safe, they carry hazards as well. A sparkler can burn at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, which is as hot as a blowtorch, according to the release.

The ACEP recommended the following fireworks Dos and Don'ts to ensure people's safety this year:

Do:

- Anyone using fireworks should be supervised by an experienced adult.
- Only buy fireworks from reputable dealers.
- Be sure to read fireworks labels and follow directions carefully.
- Keep a [fire extinguisher](#) or bucket of water nearby.
- Light fireworks one at a time.
- Discard fireworks as directed.

Don't:

- Young children should never use fireworks, including sparklers.
- Never light fireworks inside or near other objects.
- Do not stand over fireworks while lighting them and back up immediately after lighting them.
- Never point fireworks towards people.
- Never try to re-light fireworks that fail to ignite.
- Do not wear loose clothing while using fireworks.
- Fireworks should never be set off in glass or metal containers.
- Never carry fireworks in pockets.

"The safest and only thing you should do is watch a professional

fireworks display managed by experts who have proper training and experience handling these explosives," Sama recommended. "Have fun and enjoy this great American holiday. As always, we'll be ready to treat you, but we don't want to have to see you in the ER."

More information: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission provides more [fireworks safety tips](#).

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