



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

## FIREWORKS SAFETY TIPS TO HELP YOUR FOURTH OF JULY SPARKLE



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*Editor's Note: Local city ordinances may ban the use of fireworks, including sparklers. Depending on weather conditions, local governments may also have restrictions in place for fireworks use. Wisconsin residents should pay attention to their local media outlets for any announcements.*

MADISON – The Fourth of July is just around the corner, and Wisconsin residents are looking forward to firing up the grill, sharing cold drinks and hot food and lighting fireworks with family and friends. State officials ask Wisconsin families to use great caution when dealing with fireworks over the holiday weekend, particular in the presence of children.

“Each year, 40 percent of all fireworks injuries nationwide are sustained by children under the age of 15,” said Michelle Reinen, Director of Wisconsin’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. “Adults should handle and light all fireworks and children should enjoy the sights and sounds from a safe distance – the Fourth of July weekend is no exception to that rule.”

Nationwide in 2013, there were eight deaths and an estimated 11,400 consumers who sustained injuries related to fireworks. This is an increase from 8,700 injuries in 2012. Sixty-five percent, or 7,400, of the injuries in 2013 occurred in the 30 days surrounding July 4, 2013.

In 2013, approximately nine Wisconsin residents were hospitalized and 65 visited emergency departments due to fireworks-related injuries, according to Karen McKeown, State Health Officer. Children under the age of 15 made up 20 percent of these cases.

Wisconsin law regulates the use of fireworks. Fireworks such as roman candles, firecrackers, bottle rockets, mortars – anything that explodes or leaves the ground – can only be purchased and used with a permit issued by your local government.

Non-explosive devices such as sparklers and cones do not require a permit, but that does not mean they can be used safely by children. More than half of the nation’s reported fireworks-related injuries are burns. “Many parents think of sparklers as a safe toy, but a lit sparkler burns at temperatures of up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause third-degree burns,” said McKeown.

There are a number of safe alternatives to fireworks that will keep children entertained over the weekend. Consider stocking up on flashing LED lights or glow sticks, bracelets or necklaces. They can last up to 12 hours and are available in a wide range of colors, keeping your children entertained a lot longer than a sparkler or firework. As an added benefit, any of these items will help make a child visible to a driver if they are playing after nightfall.

(MORE)

If you plan to use fireworks, follow these safety tips to ensure a safe Fourth of July for your family:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- A responsible adult should closely supervise all fireworks activities.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, flammable materials and dry leaves and grass.
- Light one item at a time and then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or light them in or near metal or glass containers.
- Keep a bucket of water or a hose handy in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Most importantly – if fireworks fizzle and don't ignite, douse them with water and do not relight them!

Find additional information on fireworks safety on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Fireworks.htm>

For consumer information, visit the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection on the web at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov>, by e-mail at [datcphotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcphotline@wisconsin.gov), by phone at 1-800-422-7128, or on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/wiconsumer](http://www.facebook.com/wiconsumer).

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