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Firework & Sparkler Safety

By Louie Delaware

Although fireworks appear fun and entertaining, every year there are over 10,000 people who are injured due to fireworks and sparklers. And unfortunately, the majority of these injuries happen to children 14 years old or less. Sparklers, fountains, and novelties alone accounted for over 50% of the emergency room firework injuries in children 5 years old or younger.

Further, fireworks every year start over started an estimated 1,600 structure fires and 600 vehicle fires. For example, on Independence Day in a typical year, more fires are reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires.

So with this in mind, if you are going to be using fireworks or sparklers with young children, use the following safety tips:

- ◆ Check your local laws to ensure that they are legal where you will be using fireworks or sparklers.
- ◆ Ensure that there is an adult present at all times.
- ◆ Always read and follow the labeling instructions.
- ◆ Establish rules for how the fireworks are to be used and make certain everyone follows them.
- ◆ Always have adequate water nearby, whether a hose or buckets of water. If you are going to using sparklers, have a bucket of water to place the used wires.
- ◆ Be aware that sparklers can be as hot as 1800° F. Never allow a child to run with a lit sparkler as it is easy for a child to trip and fall on to the hot sparkler, and as most clothing is not fire resistant making it easy for a child to get a burn.
- ◆ Never throw a sparkler as the wire poses a hazard later to children or pets if they step on it and can be a hazard for lawn mowing.
- ◆ Never allow a child under 16 to light fireworks or sparklers
- ◆ Never use fireworks or sparklers indoors.
- ◆ Only light one firework at a time.
- ◆ Never try to relight a firework that does not function. Wait 20 minutes and then wet it down thoroughly to prevent inadvertent firing.
- ◆ Only use fireworks as intended. Don't try to alter them or combine them.
- ◆ Use common sense when using fireworks. Spectators should keep a safe distance from the shooter. And the shooter should wear safety glasses.
- ◆ Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Have a "designated" shooter.
- ◆ Do not ever use homemade fireworks or illegal explosives as they are very dangerous and can easily injure or kill.
- ◆ If firing something that will go up in the air, be aware of your surroundings and the wind. It is easy to set a wooden shake roof or a field of dried grass on fire.
- ◆ Alcohol and fireworks are an accident waiting to happen. Always have a designated lighter.

Make certain that you or someone else does not become a statistic. It is better to be safe than to regret



someone getting injured or starting a fire. The best thing to do is to leave the fireworks to the professionals.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru**[™], president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation, along with fire, carbon monoxide, and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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