



FIRE
SERVICES

Michiganders Urged to Know the Risks and Use Extreme Caution When Handling Fireworks

To: Michigan Fire Service

Michiganders Urged to Know the Risks and Use Extreme Caution When Handling Fireworks

June 26, 2020 – Michiganders who plan on celebrating Independence Day by setting off fireworks need to be aware of the dangers and risks involved, especially when dealing with powerful, consumer-grade devices such as firecrackers, bottle rockets and Roman candles in order to avoid tragedy.

“The Independence Day holiday allows us time to spend with friends and family, celebrating the freedom that we have here in the United States,” said Orlene Hawks, the director of the Dept. of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), in which the Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) is housed. “If you do plan to shoot your own fireworks, please remember that these are explosives and if they are used incorrectly, can cause irreparable injury and harm. It is vital that we all take every safety precaution possible to protect ourselves and our loved ones.”

“The Bureau of Fire Services is aware that many community fireworks shows have been canceled due to COVID-19,” said Fire Marshal Kevin Sehlmeier. “We also anticipate that many people will purchase consumer fireworks and provide their own fireworks show over the Fourth of July holiday weekend. BFS is asking consumers to understand basic fireworks safety before using consumer fireworks.”

In Michigan, consumer fireworks must meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards. Licensed facilities will only sell fireworks to

people 18 years of age or older. Low impact fireworks (ground-based items such as sparklers, toy snakes, snaps, and poppers) are also legal for sale and use.

State law requires that consumer-grade fireworks only be ignited from personal property. It is illegal to ignite fireworks on public property (including streets and sidewalks), school property, church property, or another person's property without their express permission. State law makes it illegal to discharge fireworks when intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

When fire-related incidents involve consumer, low impact, or illegal fireworks resulting in property damage, injury or death of another person, individuals are subject to a misdemeanor or felony punishable by imprisonment of not more than five years and fines of up to \$10,000 or both.

BFS inspectors are issuing citations to sellers who are non-compliant with the Fireworks Safety Act to ensure that fireworks retailers operate their businesses safely to protect the public. Consumers should always buy from state-certified fireworks retailers – whether in a permanent building or a tent – and can verify a license using the directions provided [here](#). Consider the following safety tips to protect lives and property:

ALWAYS:

- Follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Have an adult supervise fireworks activities, including sparklers.
- Light fireworks one at a time, then immediately back away to a safe distance.
- Ensure people and pets are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Light fireworks outdoors on a driveway or other paved surface at least 25 feet away from houses and flammable materials such as dry grass or mulch.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Douse spent fireworks in a bucket of water before discarding them in a trash can.

NEVER:

- Buy fireworks packaged in brown paper or use unlabeled fireworks – they are for professional use only.
- Experiment with or make your own fireworks.
- Allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Place any part of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse.
- Try to re-light “duds” or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully. (Rather, wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.)
- Point or throw fireworks at other people.
- Carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.

Sparklers should not be considered harmless for kids. More than 50 percent of sparkler-related injuries happen to kids under age 14 across the country. Sparklers can reach 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and have the potential to cause significant burn injuries and quickly ignite clothing and can cause grass fires if thrown on the ground. Always keep a bucket of water close by to dispose of used sparklers promptly. For more information regarding fireworks related fires and injuries, please visit the following NFPA [weblink](#).

[The Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) issued a warning about the risk fireworks present. In 2019, twelve people died and over 10,000 were injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents:

For a list of legal consumer fireworks, legal low impact fireworks, and novelties go to: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/fireworks_381040_7.pdf.