



# ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
Louisville Field Division

Contact: ATF PIO Craig W. Roegner  
Office: (502) 753-3556  
Cell: (502) 773-2614  
Email: [LouisDiv@atf.gov](mailto:LouisDiv@atf.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 28, 2007

## ATF'S TIPS FOR A SAFE FOURTH OF JULY

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — As Independence Day approaches, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) wants to remind the public to exercise caution when dealing with fireworks and only purchase legal fireworks through licensed retailers.

ATF is the federal law enforcement agency charged with enforcing federal explosives laws. ATF actively works with other federal agencies, such as the Consumer Products Safety Commission through its fireworks enforcement program, to prevent trafficking and possession of illegal fireworks, which are technically classified as illegal explosive devices. ATF investigates manufacturers and distributors of illegal explosive devices in an effort to keep them out of the hands of unsuspecting consumers.

“Make sure fireworks are legal in your area and that they are used safely,” advises Paul Vido, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF Louisville Field Division. The Louisville Field Division is comprised of 14 offices throughout Kentucky and West Virginia.

Illegal explosive devices meet neither safety nor quality standards of legally manufactured consumer fireworks. Federally banned fireworks include M-80s, M-1000s, Silver Salutes, Quarter Sticks, Quarter Pounders, and Cherry Bombs. These types of devices are sold by unscrupulous individuals who tout these items as “fireworks” when in reality they are small, illegal, unstable bombs that sometimes explode in the hands of unwary buyers or children.

The explosive material in these devices greatly exceeds the limit for common fireworks. Notoriously, these illegal explosives have almost instantaneous fuses and are designed to detonate other explosives in close proximity. Mail-order kits designed to build these fireworks also are banned. The manufacture, sale and receipt of these illegal explosives devices are a federal felony and can result in a 10-year prison sentence.

--more--

Vido warned that “these types of illegal explosives just are not safe. We want people to stay safe this 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Everyone, especially parents, needs to understand that friction, heat, or even a slight bump can cause these types of illegal devices to detonate.”

State and local fireworks laws and regulations differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Before purchasing or using any fireworks, check with the authorities in your areas to find out what is allowed. “Buy fireworks from vendors who operate openly and welcome visits by fire departments and police officers. Never buy so called ‘fireworks’ from a person selling them on the street or out of the back of a vehicle,” Vido added.

Some indicators of an illegal explosive device are:

- Resembles a roll of coins with a fuse
- A cardboard tube or oddly shaped item wrapped in brown paper filled with an explosive material
- Red, silver or brown in color
- May be one to six inches long and up to an inch or more in diameter
- Being sold on the street or out of the back of someone’s vehicle

Some important fireworks safety tips include:

- Always get the facts first about state and local fireworks ordinances. Check with your local fire department, police or sheriff’s office
- Always buy fireworks from a legal vendor.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place not accessible to youngsters.
- Always avoid rough handling of fireworks.
- Only light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from anything that might catch fire. Keep water or a fire extinguisher handy.
- Only light one firework at a time and then move away to a safe distance.
- Children and fireworks can be a volatile mix. Responsible adults should always supervise when igniting fireworks.

“Citizens can play an important role in curbing the pain and injuries caused by these illegal devices,” Vido said. The public should report the manufacture or sale of illegal fireworks or explosive devices to local law enforcement or by calling the toll-free ATF hotline at 1-888-ATF-BOMB (1-888-283-2662).

More information on ATF and its programs is at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

###