



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet & ATF

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Kentucky State Fire Marshal and ATF Encourage Kentucky Residents to Safely Celebrate the Fourth of July

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 2, 2019) – Kentucky State Fire Marshal joins the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in reminding the public to exercise caution when dealing with fireworks.

“To better ensure a safe and happy Fourth of July, the public is encouraged to enjoy firework shows conducted by licensed professionals,” said Mike Haney, Kentucky’s Fire Marshal and Director of PPC’s Division of Fire Prevention. “However, if celebrating at home, be sure to research state and local laws and regulations as they differ from city to city. Before purchasing or using fireworks, check with authorities in your area to find out what is permitted.

Illegal or improperly used fireworks can cause severe injuries or even death. According to the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC,) 121 firework-related deaths have been reported between 2003 and 2018. Last year alone, emergency departments treated an estimated 9,100 firework-related injuries; the majority occurred between June 22 and July 22 with firecrackers being the number one cause of injury.

“Injuries are avoidable,” said Haney. “Parents should be mindful that sparklers burn at approximately 2,000 degrees; hot enough to melt some metals. I’d think twice before handing a sparkler to a child.”

As the federal law enforcement agency charged with enforcing federal explosives laws, ATF actively works with other federal agencies, like CPSC through its fireworks enforcement program, to prevent trafficking of illegal fireworks, including illegal explosive devices commonly known as M-80s, M-100s, quarter sticks, cherry bombs, and silver salutes. While these items are sometimes referred to incorrectly as fireworks, use by consumers is unlawful.

“Each year, injuries and deaths are caused by the misuse of fireworks or by handling improvised or homemade explosive devices,” stated ATF Louisville Division Special Agent in Charge Stuart Lowrey. “ATF encourages the public to have a safe Fourth of July celebration by being an informed consumer and following recommended safety practices when handling fireworks.”

The Kentucky State Fire Marshal and ATF recommend the following safety practices when using consumer fireworks:

- Consumer fireworks are clearly marked and come with instructions for safe use – always read and follow directions on the label.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place not accessible to children to avoid rough handling.
- Always have an adult present when handling fireworks, and never give fireworks to children, including sparklers.
- Always wear safety glasses, light one firework at a time and then move to a safe distance.
- Never stand over fireworks while lighting and don't attempt to relight malfunctioning fireworks.
- Never light fireworks in bottles or cans.
- Never cut or take apart fireworks, and never add ingredients to fireworks.
- Keep water handy. Douse fireworks that fizzle with water. Soak leftover items in water to prevent a trash fire.
- Never use fireworks in a manner not intended or designed to be used.

The public is urged to report the use or sale of illegal fireworks or explosive devices by calling the toll-free ATF hotline at **1-888-ATF-BOMB (1-888-281-2662)**.

Firework safety tips are also available on the state fire marshal's website, <http://dhbc.ky.gov/sfm/Pages/Fireworks.aspx>.

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The Public Protection Cabinet's Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction is home to the Division of Fire Prevention and the State Fire Marshal. Through education, licensing, inspection programs and code administration, the agencies work to eliminate or reduce loss due to fires and other hazards. Learn more about the agency,

ATF is a law enforcement agency of the United States' Department of Justice that protects the public from crimes involving firearms, explosives, arson and the diversion of alcohol and tobacco products; regulates lawful commerce in firearms and explosives; and provides worldwide support to law enforcement, public safety, and industry partners. More information on ATF and its programs is available at www.atf.gov. See additional information including fireworks recalls here, <https://www.cpsc.gov/>.