



Fact Sheet

Public Affairs Division - Washington DC



Contact: Public Affairs Division

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Fireworks

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) enforces the federal explosives laws and regulations which define fireworks into two general categories: display fireworks and consumer fireworks. Consumer fireworks, unless restricted by state or local laws, are fireworks that can be sold to the general public. Consumer fireworks are defined in 27 CFR 555.11, in part, as any small firework device designed to produce visible effects by combustion and which must comply with the construction, chemical composition, and labeling regulations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Some small devices designed to produce audible effects are included, such as whistling devices, ground devices containing 50 mg or less of flash powder, and aerial devices containing 130 mg or less of flash powder. Consumer fireworks are generally marked with brightly colored and decorated paper and include, in part, a trade name and manufacturing information.

Display fireworks, also defined in 27 CFR 555.11, are large fireworks designed primarily to produce visible or audible effects by combustion, deflagration, or detonation. This term includes, but is not limited to, salutes containing more than 2 grains (130 mg) of flash powder, aerial shells containing more than 40 grams of pyrotechnic compositions (excluding the lift charge), and other display pieces which exceed the limits of explosive materials for classification as consumer fireworks.

Any person engaging in the business of manufacturing, importing, or dealing in display fireworks must have an ATF explosives license. Any person importing for their own use or receiving or transporting display fireworks must have at least an ATF permit. It should be noted that although finished consumer fireworks are exempt from ATF regulation, persons manufacturing consumer fireworks, and articles pyrotechnic, for commercial purposes require at least an ATF manufacturer's license.

If you require information on the classification of certain fireworks, please contact your local ATF office.

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