

News from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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CPSC Announces Drop in Fireworks-Related Injuries; Consumers Still Urged To Celebrate Safe This July 4th

CPSC Introduces the New Face of Safety - Chairman Inez Tenenbaum

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s new Chairman, Inez Tenenbaum, urged families today to put safety first during the Fourth of July holiday and celebrate with caution when it comes to fireworks. The latest report from CPSC indicates that there were reports of seven fireworks-related deaths and an estimated 7,000 hospital emergency room treated injuries in 2008. In 2007, CPSC had reports of eleven deaths and an estimated 9,800 injuries.

Chairman Tenenbaum, in a press event and fireworks demonstration on the National Mall, reminded consumers that even with fewer reported deaths and injuries in 2008, the one-month period surrounding the Fourth of July is still the most dangerous time. In fact, 70 percent of all fireworks-related injuries occurred between June 20 and July 20.

“CPSC wants to keep reducing fireworks-related deaths and injuries in 2009,” said Chairman Tenenbaum. “Children should never play with or light fireworks, and adults should watch our demonstrations to see how powerful and dangerous illegal fireworks can be.”

Chairman Tenenbaum was joined on the National Mall by Tony West, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division of the Department of Justice; Dan Baldwin, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Trade within Customs and Border Protection (CBP); and Joseph Riehl, Acting Assistant Director of the Office of Enforcement Programs and Services for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

CPSC continues to work to keep American families safe by educating the public about the risk of injury associated with fireworks, enforcing fireworks regulations, and prosecuting dealers and distributors who manufacture and sell illegal explosives.

As a part of its fireworks enforcement program, CPSC actively works with ATF to investigate roadside stands, warehouses and retail stores that sell professional grade explosives to consumers, and homes that serve as havens for the manufacture of dangerous fireworks devices. These investigations have resulted in dozens of successful prosecutions by the Justice Department's Office of Consumer Litigation and U.S. Attorney offices across the country.

On June 19, 2009, a federal judge in the Eastern District of New York sentenced Jon Cea and Vincent Cea to 24 months and 36 months in federal prison, respectively, after they pleaded guilty to conspiracy to engage in the business of dealing in explosive materials, involving the illegal sale of more than 1,000 pounds of explosives. The defendants and their customers were not licensed, yet they purchased and sold professional display fireworks. CPSC and the Justice Department worked in partnership on this case.

At the ports, CPSC is working alongside CBP to ensure shipments are in compliance with the federal regulations. With CBP assistance, last year CPSC staff found through sampling and testing of fireworks shipments that forty-nine percent of these shipments contained illegal fireworks.

While the federal government remains committed to stopping the manufacture and sale of illegal fireworks, CPSC encourages consumers who decide to purchase legal fireworks to:

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- Avoid buying fireworks that come in brown paper packaging, as this can often be a sign that the fireworks were made for professional displays and could pose a danger to consumers.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activities. Parents often don't realize that there are many injuries from sparklers to children under five. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse. Move back a safe distance immediately after lighting.
- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Light one item at a time, then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
- After fireworks fully complete their functioning, douse the spent device with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding to prevent a trash fire.

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Fireworks-Related Injury Rates, 1991-2008
 (As compiled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission)

Year	Estimated Injuries	Injuries per 100,000 People
200	7,000	2.3
200	9,800	3.3
200	9,200	3.1
200	10,800	3.7
200	9,600	3.3
200	9,300	3.2
200	8,800	3.1
200	9,500	3.3
200	11,000	3.9
199	8,500	3.1
199	8,500	3.1
199	8,300	3.0
199	7,300	2.7
199	10,900	4.1
199	12,500	4.8
199	12,100	4.6
199	12,500	4.9
199	10,900	4.3