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American Pyrotechnics Association Offers Tips to Ring in the New Year Safely with Fireworks

Bethesda, Maryland, December 19, 2007 – Millions of Americans will ring in the New Year with sparklers, firecrackers, trick noisemakers and a variety of consumer fireworks. In an effort to ensure that the holiday is a safe one, the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) has issued the following safety tips for using consumer fireworks safely:

Be a smart consumer. Always purchase fireworks from an established retail outlet. Never purchase or use dangerous, illegal explosives such as M80s.

Follow the rules. Observe local laws; check with your local police or fire department to determine what fireworks can be legally discharged in your area. Be especially mindful of restrictions on fireworks usage in areas affected by drought conditions.

Use common sense. Be sure to read and follow directions before using fireworks.

Alcohol and fireworks don't mix. Have a responsible, sober adult in charge of all fireworks activities.

A parent's job is never done. Adult supervision should be constant during all fireworks activities. Young children should never be given fireworks; even sparklers can be unsafe if used improperly.

One is the best number. When lighting fireworks, light one at a time, move quickly away and keep spectators back at a safe distance.

Never use fireworks indoors. Always ignite fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from buildings, vehicles and flammable materials.

Stay out of the line of fire. Never shoot, aim or throw fireworks in the direction of another person.

Protect yourself. Wear eye protection when using fireworks. Never put any part of your body over a firework.

Have water nearby. Always keep a bucket of water handy to soak finished sparklers and other “hot” devices. Also keep a garden hose in the area for emergencies.

Do not re-ignite. Never try to re-ignite fireworks that have malfunctioned. Douse or soak fireworks in a bucket of water, wait 15 minutes before properly disposing.

The fireworks industry has experienced unprecedented growth during the past decade with annual fireworks usage exceeding 278 million pounds. And, while fireworks usage has skyrocketed, the fireworks-related injury rate has fallen by a startling 91% since the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission promulgated regulations for fireworks in 1976. “Even with the sharp decline in the fireworks-related injury rate, our continuing resolution is to make sure that regardless of the time of year, fireworks safety is top-of-mind,” says Julie L. Heckman, Executive Director of the APA. “On the eve of this new year, we encourage the public to celebrate safely with fireworks by obeying local laws and following common sense safety measures. By doing so, we can ring in the new year with sparkling excitement in a safe manner.”

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The APA is the leading trade association of the fireworks industry. The APA supports and promotes safety standards for all aspects of fireworks. The APA has a diverse membership including regulated and licensed manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, importers and suppliers of fireworks, and professional display firms. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts & figures, and state laws, can be found on the APA’s web site at www.americanpyro.com

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