



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:
Julie L. Heckman
American Pyrotechnics Association
(301) 907-8181
jheckman@americanpyro.com

Backyard Fireworks Celebrations Will Set New Record for July Fourth

Bethesda, MD, June 22, 2005 As the Fourth of July approaches, Americans are buying more fireworks for backyard celebrations than ever before, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association.

Retailers across the country are reporting brisk sales of consumer fireworks, usually sold at roadside stands.

The association attributes the increased sales to an upsurge of patriotism, as fireworks are historically a symbol of American independence and national pride.

Another factor is that more states are allowing the sale of consumer fireworks, which are now legal in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

Julie L. Heckman, Executive Director of the American Pyrotechnics Association, said that while more and more Americans are choosing to celebrate July Fourth with backyard fireworks, there will probably be fewer injuries this year from misuse of fireworks.

This is because the fireworks themselves are safer, and consumers are more aware of safety.

There has been a **75 percent** drop in injuries since 1990, although **fireworks use** has more than **tripled** in that period, she said.

All of today's consumer fireworks meet stringent safety standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Ms. Heckman said. "Even though they are mostly made in China, they have to conform with U.S. Government safety standards or they cannot be imported and sold here."

Another reason for fewer injuries, she said, is that for many years the fireworks industry and government have conducted a national safety campaign directed at children, parents and fire safety officials.

They encourage all consumers to follow these safety rules:

- Always buy fireworks from an established retail outlet.
- Observe local laws. If local laws do not allow consumer fireworks, enjoy a professional display.
- Responsible adult supervision is a must. Young children should never be given fireworks to handle alone – even sparklers can be unsafe if improperly used.
- Never shoot, aim or throw fireworks in the direction of another person or animal.
- Keep a bucket of water handy for emergencies (great for soaking hot sparklers).
- Never try to re-ignite fireworks that have malfunctioned. Douse with water; wait 15 minutes before properly disposing.
- Eye protection should always be worn by the designated fireworks shooter.

"By adhering to these practical, common sense safety tips," says Heckman, "we can make this year's Independence Day holiday the safest ever."

For additional information on how to safely enjoy fireworks, please visit the National Council on Fireworks Safety web site at www.fireworksafety.com

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 public display firms. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts & figures, history of fireworks, and state laws, can be found on APA's web site at www.americanpyro.com