



For Immediate Release

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Fireworks Safety for the Winter Holidays; Tips to Ring in the New Year Safely

Bethesda, Maryland, Dec. 27, 2004 – Millions of Americans across the nation will ring in the New Year with sparklers, firecrackers, trick noisemakers and a wide variety of consumer fireworks in their backyards and on their cul-de-sacs. In an effort to ensure that the holiday season is a safe one, the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) has issued the following basic safety tips for using consumer fireworks over the winter holidays:

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. Never build or experiment with homemade fireworks. If local laws do not allow use of consumer fireworks, enjoy a professional fireworks display.

Use common sense. Be sure to read and follow directions before using. Carefully inspect purchased fireworks. Be sure they're not leaking powder and that all items are well constructed. Avoid items that appear to have been wet and have since dried out.

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

One is the best number. When igniting fireworks, light one at a time, move quickly away and keep spectators back at a safe distance. Do not use any containers such as bottles or cans to launch fireworks.

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 have 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 220 million pounds. And, while fireworks usage has skyrocketed, the fireworks-related injury rate has fallen by a startling 88% since the current federal regulations for consumer fireworks were promulgated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1976. “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, and with such a decline in injury rates, this is an important opportunity for all of us to reach new safety goals.”

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 APA’s web site at www.americanpyro.com

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Links:

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Regulations:
<http://www.cpsc.gov/BUSINFO/regsumfireworks.PDF>

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