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American Pyrotechnics Association Urges Safe Fireworks Celebrations as America Marks 250 Years of Independence

National Expansion of Bucket Brigade Program Helps Communities Reduce Fire Risks During Historic Fourth of July

SOUTHPORT, NC. – June 22, 2026— As Americans prepare to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday this Fourth of July, the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) is encouraging families and communities nationwide to make fireworks safety a central part of their holiday traditions.

Fireworks have been woven into America's Independence Day celebrations since July 4, 1777, when Philadelphia commemorated the first anniversary of independence with fireworks, bonfires, bells, and cannon fire. Two and a half centuries later, fireworks remain one of the nation's most enduring symbols of patriotism and celebration.

"As the nation gathers to celebrate 250 years of freedom, we have an opportunity to make this Fourth of July one of the safest in American history," said Julie L. Heckman, Executive Director of the American Pyrotechnics Association. "Through stronger safety standards, better consumer education, and innovative programs like the [Bucket Brigade](#) program, Americans are more empowered than ever to celebrate responsibly."

Over the past several decades, the fireworks industry has worked alongside safety advocates, regulators, fire service leaders, and educators to strengthen safety standards and improve public awareness. Consumer fireworks sold legally in the United States are subject to extensive federal regulations and testing requirements enforced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Advancements in product design, improved fusing systems, safer packaging, enhanced labeling, and expanded public education efforts have helped foster a stronger culture of fireworks safety nationwide.

According to federal injury data compiled through the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) and reported by the American Fireworks Standards Laboratory, an estimated

13,000 people were treated for fireworks-related injuries in 2025, representing a 12 percent decrease compared to 2024. While continued education remains essential, the long-term trend reflects significant improvements in safety relative to increased fireworks participation.

One area that continues to require attention is the proper disposal of used fireworks.

To address this issue, the American Pyrotechnics Safety & Education Foundation (APSEF) has expanded its successful Bucket Brigade program, which encourages consumers to place spent fireworks in a bucket of water and allow them to soak overnight before disposal.

"The Bucket Brigade is one of the simplest and most effective fireworks safety initiatives we've seen," Heckman said. "Many people don't realize that used fireworks can retain heat and potentially reignite after a celebration ends. A bucket of water can make all the difference."

The program has already demonstrated measurable success. In Colorado, 18 fire departments participated in the initiative, distributing nearly 2,000 buckets statewide. Participating communities reported meaningful reductions in fireworks-related fires, including one jurisdiction that experienced zero fireworks-related calls associated with personal fireworks use during the holiday period.

As the program expands nationally ahead of the July Fourth holiday, APA is encouraging local fire departments, retailers, businesses, civic organizations, and community leaders to participate by distributing buckets, sharing educational materials, and promoting safe fireworks practices.

"The best public safety solutions are often practical, accessible, and community-driven," Heckman added. "When families, businesses, and local organizations work together, everyone benefits."

APA reminds consumers to always follow local laws, read and follow product instructions, keep a water source nearby, and properly dispose of used fireworks by soaking them overnight before placing them in the trash.

"As we celebrate 250 years of American independence, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that safety and celebration go hand in hand," said Heckman. "The goal is simple: ensuring everyone returns home safely after the last firework fades from the sky."

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The American Pyrotechnics Association is the leading trade association for the fireworks industry, representing manufacturers, distributors, retailers, suppliers, and professional display companies. APA promotes safety, regulatory compliance, and public education while advancing the safe and responsible use of fireworks throughout the United States.

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