



Fireworks Safety

Enjoying A Safe Holiday

Each year, thousands of Americans visit emergency rooms for treatment of fireworks-related injuries. Children are the most frequent victims, with those under age 15 accounting for 40% of all injuries.

HOW ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission regulates fireworks that can be sold legally to consumers and is responsible for setting minimum standards. These regulations and standards have helped make them safer, but all fireworks are potentially hazardous. A gust of wind, for example, can topple fireworks, scattering sparks and debris into the eyes of whoever is nearby.

Sparklers, which are legal in most states, can burn at up to 1,800° F, hot enough to cause third-degree burns. In the dark, it can be difficult to estimate the distance between the end of a lit sparkler and a person's face. Some younger children may lack the coordination to handle sparklers safely. Often considered a "safe" firework, sparklers are the number one cause of all fireworks injuries in both adults and children.

Firecrackers can cause eye injuries if they erupt at close range. Someone who inspects a firecracker that failed to go off, for example, could be the victim of a delayed explosion.

Bottle rockets are responsible for some of the most serious eye injuries. They can fly erratically and explode in someone's face, causing eyelid lacerations, corneal abrasions, traumatic cataract, retinal detachment, optic nerve damage, eyeball rupture, eye muscle damage or complete blindness.

BE A SPECTATOR

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public display conducted by trained pyrotechnicians. Prevent Blindness America, the American Academy of Ophthalmologists and the National Fire Protection Association agree that it is best to leave the lighting of fireworks to professionals. The Academy recommends these additional safety tips:

Never let children play with fireworks of any type.	If you find unexploded fireworks, do not touch them. Immediately contact your local fire or police department.
View fireworks from at least 500 feet away, or up to a quarter of a mile for best viewing.	If you get an eye injury from fireworks, seek medical help immediately.
Respect safety barriers set up to allow pyrotechnicians to do their jobs safely.	Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology, National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Prevent Blindness America, National Fire Protection Association
Follow directives given by event ushers or public safety personnel.	

For more information, call **1.888.550.BLUE (2583)** or **TTY 1.800.523.2847** or visit us at www.fepblue.org (click on the link to FEP BlueVision).

To enroll, visit www.benefeds.com.