



Division of Fire Safety
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
J. William Degnan, State Fire Marshal



Office: NH Incident Management Center, 110 Smokey Bear Blvd., Concord, NH
Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305
603-223-4289, FAX 603-223-4294
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964 ARSON HOTLINE 1-800-400-3526

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:
State Fire Marshal J. William Degnan 223-4289
Chief David Parenti, President NH Association of Fire Chiefs 267-8333

FIREWORKS SAFETY – Officials Urge Caution With Home Fireworks

For many Americans, fireworks have become a way of life during the holidays – beautifully colored sparks flying through the air in concert with loud rumbling explosions. As exciting as this may seem, people often forget that they are playing with explosives. Each July Fourth, thousands of people, often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks. New Hampshire State Fire Marshal J. William Degnan and Chief David Parenti, President of the NH Association of Fire Chiefs, warn residents that the use of consumer fireworks should be done with extreme vigilance and responsibility. "Fireworks are explosives devices and are dangerous and unpredictable", says Marshal Degnan. "The few seconds of pleasure that firework displays may bring to family and friends are not worth the risk of permanent scarring, loss of vision & hearing, dismemberment or even death". Wooded areas, homes, and even automobiles have become engulfed in flames because of fireworks. Chief Parenti, says, "A substantial portion of structure fire property loss is due to fireworks typically involving rockets. These rockets can land on rooftops and still retain enough heat to cause a fire." Chief Parenti also warns that, "Sparklers burn at a temperature of more 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit. To put this into perspective, water boils at 212°F and glass melts at 900°F." He adds, "**Please** keep them out of the hands of small children."

Marshal Degnan noted that New Hampshire State law requires:

- You must be 21 or older to purchase permissible fireworks.
- You must be 21 or older to display permissible fireworks.
- You must be in a community that allows the use of permissible fireworks.
- You must be on your own private property or have written permission of the property owner.

Degnan recommends that public displays conducted by trained professionals are the safest way to enjoy fireworks. He said, "Please leave fireworks to the professionals!" However, should you decide to use consumer fireworks Fire Marshal Degnan encourages you to use them with extreme caution.

- Check your local fire department to make sure that fireworks are permitted in your community.
- Always follow the specific directions for each item.
- Be sure to have an extinguishing device readily accessible i.e. water hose, bucket of water, fire extinguisher.
- Stay the recommended distance away from buildings and viewers and avoid areas with dry brush, grass or debris; flying sparks easily ignite them.
- Light one item at a time and never inside an enclosed container.
- NEVER attempt to relight a firework or a non-functioning firework.
- NEVER allow children to handle fireworks or to pick up leftover fireworks debris off the ground.

Both Marshal Degnan and Chief Parenti want everyone to enjoy the holiday and have a safe Independence Day celebration, so please act responsibly!

