

MEDIA RELEASE

The Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Be Fireworks Smart this Fourth of July ***Minimize injury, property risks: Leave fireworks to the pros***

NASHVILLE, TN – Celebrating our nation's independence with consumer fireworks has been a longstanding tradition in the United States. However, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are seriously injured each year through their use.

State Fire Marshal and Commerce and Insurance Commissioner Julie Mix McPeak encourages Tennesseans to be fireworks smart this July Fourth by opting to attend organized fireworks displays: "We would encourage you to enjoy the holiday at a public display presented by trained professionals, where compliance with state-of-the-art fire codes offers a safer way to celebrate our nation's independence."

Know the facts – According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), far more fires are reported on Independence Day than on any other day of the year in the United States. Two out of five of these fires are caused by fireworks. In 2011, fireworks caused an estimated 17,800 reported fires. These fires resulted in an estimated eight reported civilian deaths, 40 civilian injuries and \$32 million in direct property damage.

Follow the law – Counties and most cities have their own ordinances and restrictions regarding firework use, so it's important to first check with your local police station or fire department to determine the local law before setting off fireworks in your area. A 2007 law prevents children under 16 from purchasing fireworks; and those who are age 16 or 17 must present a photo ID to purchase them. It's also worth noting that state legislation passed in 2011 reclassified sky lanterns as special fireworks exclusively for use by individuals with a professional license (certified flame effect operator, certified outdoor display operator or certified proximate pyrotechnic operator).

The general public cannot purchase or use sky lanterns, and if found in the possession of someone who does not have a professional license issued by the State Fire Marshal, sky lanterns can be confiscated and later destroyed.

Think safety – If consumer fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to set them off on your own, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

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- Never allow children to handle or ignite fireworks.

DAVY CROCKET TOWER, 10th FLOOR
500 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
www.tn.gov/commerce/

- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- Wear eye protection.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never throw or point fireworks at people or animals.
- Only light fireworks outdoors on a smooth, flat surface away from homes, dry leaves and flammable materials.
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Keep a bucket of water and a garden hose nearby in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Sparklers are not toys and cause hundreds of injuries every year. Sparklers burn hot, can reach temperatures as high as 1,200° F, and stay hot long after they've burned out. You wouldn't hand a matchbook or lighter to a child to wave around or play with – so, don't give a child a sparkler.

The State Fire Marshal's Office (www.tn.gov/commerce/sfm/) is a division of the Department of Commerce and Insurance (www.tn.gov/commerce/), which works to protect consumers while ensuring fair competition for industries and professionals who do business in Tennessee. www.tn.gov/commerce/, [@TNCommerceInsur](https://twitter.com/TNCommerceInsur) (Twitter), <http://on.fb.me/uFQwUZ> (Facebook), <http://bit.ly/ry1GyX> (YouTube)

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