

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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FIRE SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Michigan City, IN (June 12, 2003) - Please ask yourself before you light that Firework: "Is this safe enough to risk the happy and fun 4th of July holiday with my family, friends, and neighbors?" Everyone this year wants to show their patriotism, but do it safely not at the cost of injuring to you or others.

The Michigan City Fire Department would like to remind our community that it is illegal for residents of Indiana to use fireworks that go "bang, and/or fly in the air." Non exploding types such as smoking or most sparking fireworks are legal to sell and use in Indiana.

The confusion about legality comes from the reality that firework stands can sell any type of firework to anyone with the money to buy them. It is legal for a wholesaler to sell fireworks to another wholesaler. However, the buyer has to sign an affidavit that states they will take them out of Indiana in five days. The purpose of this law is to make it possible for fireworks manufacturers to locate their businesses in Indiana, selling fireworks to wholesalers that are located in areas where fireworks are legal. The problem comes from the vague way the law was written in a 1993 Supreme Court ruling that read: "Retail sale of fireworks to the general public is not rendered legal by the routine use of written assurance." But the court didn't say it was illegal, either. This creates the loop hole in the law that allows illegal fireworks to be purchased by the general public in Indiana.

This does not change the fact that the detonation of these types of fireworks is still illegal in Indiana.

So "PLEASE LEAVE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS."

When things go wrong with fireworks it happens fast and furious, much faster than a fire service or medical service can respond at that second. That's why we require safety services (Fire, E.M.S., and Police) at the location of a professional display.

Are you willing to take the risk of hurting yourself, a family member, or neighbor? Because once you light the rocket or aerial bomb, you have no control of where it is going.

Statistics show that annually fireworks cause "Tens of Millions" of dollars in property damage and, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Commission, cause more than 8,000 Americans to make trips to the emergency room every year. Injuries include blindness, lacerations, amputations and

burns in varying degrees. Some burns leave lifetime disfiguring scars. Even sparklers, which can heat up to 2,000 degrees, pose a serious danger in the hands of children and adults.

Did you know that M-80s, cherry bombs and quarter sticks are so highly explosive that they have been banned by Federal law since 1966?

An analysis prepared by CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission) staff reveals that in 2001, hospital emergency rooms treated about 9,500 people for fireworks-related injuries. The number of injuries has decreased significantly from the highs of 1992-94, when injuries averaged 12,500 a year. From 1994 to 2001, the number of fireworks injuries fell by one fourth, from 12,500 to 9,500.

Ninety-five (95%) percent of people injured by fireworks are injured during the three (3) week period of June 22 to July 14; the average age is 8.5 years old, and adult supervision was present in 54% of these cases.

Firecrackers were associated with 42% of the injuries, followed by bottle rockets which are the cause of 58% of all related eye injuries, and over half of all people hurt by fireworks are bystanders.

If you have made a decision to use legal fireworks this 4th of July, the Fire Department asks that eye protection be worn by operators and bystanders as 25% of the recorded injuries reported are to eyes.

HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES TO USE.

- ✓ Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks. "Sparklers burn at temperatures of 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit."
- ✓ Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- ✓ Do not try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- ✓ Never light fireworks if there is a draught condition (dry grass, leaves, etc...).
- ✓ Restrict fireworks to open areas away from spectators.
- ✓ Always have a bucket of water and/or a fire extinguisher nearby in case of a malfunction or a fire. Know how to operate the fire extinguisher properly.

The Michigan City Fire Department urges residents that the best way to enjoy fireworks is to attend Public Fireworks Displays put on by trained professionals who follow state of the art fire codes.

Remember if you use fireworks you are "PLAYING WITH FIRE."

Link to State Laws [http://www.americanpyro.com/State%20Laws%20\(main\)/statelaws.html](http://www.americanpyro.com/State%20Laws%20(main)/statelaws.html)

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