



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Fire Commissioner Highlights Firework Safety Heading into Summer Celebrations

Allentown, PA – As millions of Pennsylvanians prepare to celebrate Independence Day, State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego joined local leaders and the Burn Prevention Network (BPN) today in urging residents to take the necessary steps to protect both their loved ones and property.

"We say it every year because it's true; fireworks are not toys," said Trego. "With significant progress being made on the vaccination front, this summer holds the promise of a return to normalcy in many ways. Much like a vaccine, there are many simple precautions we can take to ensure a fireworks display doesn't result in an unnecessary trip to an emergency room."

The Consumer Product Safety Commission [reported](#) that in 2018, there were five nonprofessional fireworks-related deaths and an estimated 9,100 patients were treated for fireworks injuries in hospital emergency rooms nationwide. Approximately half of the injuries reported were burns, with the head, eyes, face, or ears being the most frequently impacted part of the body. Thirty-six percent of those injuries involved children under the age of 15.

Trego gave the following suggestions:

- **Never** allow children to play with fireworks, even sparklers, which can burn at temperatures of at least 1200 degrees.
- Only allow adults to light fireworks one at a time, then quickly back away.
- **Never** point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or garden hose handy in case of a fire.
- **Never** pick up or try to relight fireworks that have not fully ignited.
- After the fireworks have burned, fully douse them with water before picking them up or disposing to prevent trash fires.
- **Never** use fireworks after consuming alcohol, or other medications or substances that can impair judgment or the ability to react quickly to an emergency.
- Whether attending a professional display, or using consumer fireworks, **always** remain at a safe distance from the ignition location.
- Be sensitive of neighbors and their pets, particularly if military veterans live nearby.

"Sale of consumer fireworks have more than doubled in the US between 2019 and 2020," BPN CEO Dan Dillard added. "During that same period, fireworks-related injuries have increased by 50 percent. In Pennsylvania, this situation has been even more acute since the passage of the Fireworks Law of 2017. BPN understands that fireworks are a traditional part of many community celebrations. Staying safe and informed while celebrating is why we have launched 'Celebrate Safely PA!', a statewide public safety campaign."

Pennsylvanians are encouraged to continue to practice social distancing and other preventative measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. While many mitigation actions taken by the state are lifted, the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic remains serious. Social distancing and other preventative measures like wearing a mask if you are not fully vaccinated and washing hands frequently reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to practicing social distancing, Pennsylvanians should:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Wear a mask if you are not fully vaccinated

National Fire Protection Association ([NFPA](#)) statistics show fireworks start more than 18,500 fires per year and cause an average of \$43 million in direct property damage.

Under state law, Pennsylvanians who are at least 18 years old may purchase and use Class C, otherwise known as consumer-grade, fireworks. Certain restrictions apply, including:

- They cannot be ignited or discharged on public or private property without the express permission of the property owner.
- They cannot be discharged from within a motor vehicle or building.
- They cannot be discharged toward a motor vehicle or building.
- They cannot be discharged within 150 feet of an occupied structure, whether or not a person is actually present.
- They cannot be discharged while the person is under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or another drug.

Local ordinances may include additional restrictions, so always check with your municipality before purchasing or using Class C fireworks. Additional tips, and seasonal fire safety tips can be found [online](#). Additionally, residents can subscribe to the ReadyPA monthly preparedness newsletter which features timely preparedness tips. Sign up to receive this helpful information [here](#).

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