

Fireworks Position Statement

Position Statement

Prevent Blindness supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks and sparklers, except those used in authorized public displays by competent licensed operators.

In order to eliminate the health and economic impact of fireworks accidents, Prevent Blindness further supports the following:

- All state governments should adopt a uniform model law that would establish standards and codes for public fireworks displays conducted under controlled conditions by trained and licensed personnel.
- The importation, general sale and indiscriminate use of all fireworks (including consumer fireworks and sparklers) by unlicensed adults and children should be banned. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission should work to ban the use of consumer fireworks and sparklers by the public.
- Federal agencies should enact and/or rigidly enforce regulations prohibiting the importation, Internet/mail order and interstate transportation of consumer fireworks and sparklers.
- Healthcare practitioners and local authorities should be required to report any fireworks or sparkler-related injuries, property damages and deaths. Injuries and incidents can be reported to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission by calling 800.638.2772 or filing a report on their website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.
- All professionals, organizations and agencies concerned with the safety of the American public should intensify educational efforts to inform adults and children of the hazards associated with the use of all types of fireworks and sparklers.

*Note: Sparklers include two classifications, based upon the type of combustible used: Certain sparklers are classified as 1.4G fireworks (often called “consumer fireworks”), while others are classified as “novelties.” **Both types of sparklers burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit.** For the purposes of this paper, the term “sparklers” refers to sparklers in both classifications.*

Prevent Blindness further promotes the following message:

- Fireworks are extremely dangerous.
- There is no safe way for you or your family to use fireworks.
- Do not purchase, use or store fireworks or sparklers.
- Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks and sparklers.
- Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

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Discussion:

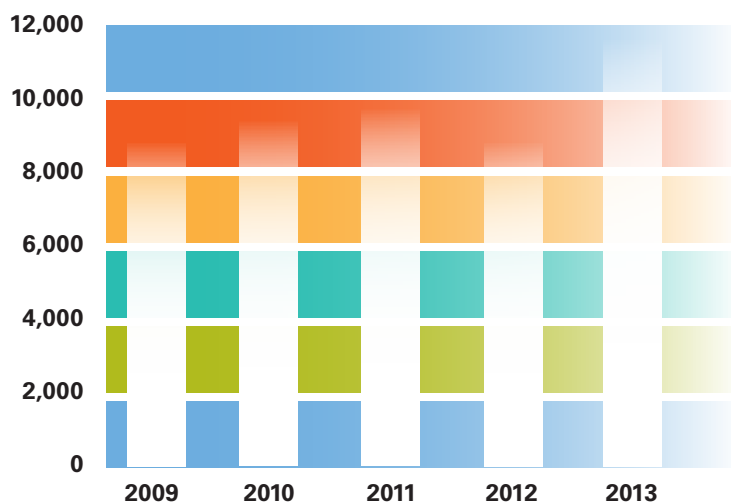
General Facts about Fireworks

- Fireworks are classified into two categories: “Display” and “Consumer.” These categories were assigned by the U.S. Department of Transportation based on the United Nations’ Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.
- “Display Fireworks” are devices used by park districts for public exhibition. In 1966, the federal government outlawed all display fireworks from interstate commerce for private use, and also began to regulate the manufacture and sale of devices sold to the public.
- “Consumer Fireworks” are any small device commonly bought over-the-counter. These are also referred to as Class C or 1.4G fireworks.
- Ground fireworks, such as firecrackers, have a maximum allowable charge of 50 milligrams of gunpowder.
- Aerial devices, such as bottle rockets, have a maximum allowable charge of 130 milligrams of gunpowder.
- Other types of consumer fireworks are sparklers, roman candles, fountains and snakes.

Facts about Fireworks Injuries

- Fireworks were involved in an estimated 11,400 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments during calendar year 2013, 8,700 injuries during 2012 and 9,600 in 2011.ⁱ

FIREWORKS INJURIES



- The Consumer Product Safety Commission study of 7,400 fireworks-related injuries occurring from June 21, 2013 to July 21, 2013 revealed:
 - Males accounted for 57 percent of fireworks injuries.



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- Children less than 15 years of age accounted for 40% of fireworks-related injuries
 - Among different types of fireworks, sparklers were associated with the greatest number of estimated injuries at 2,300. Firecrackers and bottle rockets were associated with 800 and 300 injuries, respectively.
 - The parts of the body most often injured were hands and fingers (estimated 36 percent); head, face and ears (estimated 22 percent); eyes (estimated 16 percent); and legs (estimated 14 percent).ⁱⁱ
- According to the U.S. Eye Injury Registry, bottle rockets are the most frequent cause of serious eye injury requiring hospitalization.ⁱⁱⁱ
 - Innocent bystanders are often at risk and rockets are often the cause. Rockets are unpredictable, and their flight path is erratic.^{iv}
 - According to the National Fire Protection Association, in a single year, fireworks will cause thousands of fires and millions of dollars in direct property damage. In 2011, an estimated 17,800 reported fires were caused by fireworks, including 1,200 structure and 400 vehicle fires. These fires resulted in eight civilian deaths, 40 civilian injuries and \$32 million in direct property damage.^v
 - A study of 53 serious ocular fireworks injuries reported from the Eye Injury Registry of Alabama revealed surgical intervention was required in 56.6% of the cases. Bottle rockets were responsible for all surgeries in which the injured eye had to be removed. Permanent residual vision loss occurred in all but four cases.^{vi}

Fireworks Control Laws

- Currently only four states ban the use of all fireworks for private use (Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York); four states allow only sparklers and/or novelties (Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Vermont); and 42 states and the District of Columbia allow consumer fireworks as approved by an enforcing authority or as specified by law.^{vii}
- The enforcement of local, state and federal fireworks laws is extremely difficult. Illegal transportation of fireworks into states that have restrictive legislation is a common practice. Internet/mail order sales of fireworks and/or the ingredients to manufacture fireworks are really not regulated.

Approval:

This statement was approved by the Prevent Blindness Board of Directors on November 8, 2014.

Review Date:

The fireworks position statement will be reviewed again in November 2016.

References

ⁱ Tu Y and Granados D , “2013 Fireworks Annual Report: Fireworks-Related Deaths, Emergency Department-Treated Injuries, and Enforcement Activities During 2013,” U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington DC, June 2014. Accessed at <http://www.cpsc.gov/Global/Research-and-Statistics/Injury-Statistics/Fuel-Lighters-and-Fireworks/2013FireworksReport.pdf>. Accessed on October 16, 2014.

ⁱⁱ Tu Y and Granados D , “2013 Fireworks Annual Report: Fireworks-Related Deaths, Emergency Department-Treated Injuries, and Enforcement Activities During 2013,” U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington DC, June 2014. Accessed at <http://www.cpsc.gov/Global/Research-and-Statistics/Injury-Statistics/Fuel-Lighters-and-Fireworks/2013FireworksReport.pdf>. Accessed on October 16, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ Camesaca, F.I., M.D., et al., *Ocular Fireworks Injuries: Tissue Damage, Surgical Therapy and Visual Outcome in 53 Cases*, Birmingham, AL: U.S. Eye Registry, 1989.

^{iv} Camesaca, F.I., M.D., et al., *Ocular Fireworks Injuries: Tissue Damage, Surgical Therapy and Visual Outcome in 53 Cases*, Birmingham, AL: U.S. Eye Registry, 1989.

^{vi} Hall Jr, J.R., Fireworks Report, National Fire Protection Association. Quincy, MA, June 2013. Accessed at <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/Files/Research/NFPA%20reports/Major%20Causes/osfireworks.pdf>. Accessed on October 11, 2013.

^{vii} Camesaca, F.I., M.D., et al., *Ocular Fireworks Injuries: Tissue Damage, Surgical Therapy and Visual Outcome in 53 Cases*, Birmingham, AL: U.S. Eye Registry, 1989.

^{vii} American Pyrotechnics Association, 2014 State Fireworks Control Laws, June 2014. Accessed at http://www.americanpyro.com/assets/docs/State_Laws/2014%20state%20laws%20firework%20map.pdf. Accessed October 16, 2014.