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Prevent Blindness Works to Educate the Public on Dangers of Consumer Fireworks

- Non-profit Group Provides Alternative Ideas on Ways Families Can Celebrate Independence Day safely -

CHICAGO (June 14, 2017) – The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#), estimated that injuries from fireworks sent 8,000 Americans to the emergency room over the Fourth of July holiday. The latest CPSC annual report stated that forty-two percent of the estimated emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries were to individuals younger than 20 years of age. Sadly, the CPSC also reported 11 non-occupational fireworks-related deaths.

The [American Pyrotechnics Association](#) states that Delaware, Massachusetts and New Jersey are the only states that ban all consumer fireworks. Fireworks laws vary from state to state and sometimes, within different counties.

A recent study, "[Effect of Fireworks Laws on Pediatric Fireworks-Related Burn Injuries](#)," published in the *Journal of Burn Care & Research*, concluded that the relaxing of fireworks laws in the United States has had a dramatic effect on the severity of the related injuries, resulting in more inpatient admissions and longer length of stay in the hospital.

Yet despite the thousands of injuries and consumer firework-related deaths, some state government representatives are moving to lift restrictions on consumer fireworks. In fact, in Iowa, [a new law enacted in April](#) allows retail sales of consumer fireworks in permanent buildings between June 1 and July 8, and again between Dec. 10 and Jan. 3.

As a public health-based organization, [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. The national non-profit group, including its affiliates, works with leading organizations to educate the public on the dangers of consumer fireworks and endorses legislation to help protect adults and children from needless injuries from fireworks.

The CPSC states that burns from fireworks are the most common injury to all parts of the body, except the eyes, where contusions, lacerations, and foreign bodies in the

eyes occurred more frequently. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), approximately one third of eye injuries from fireworks result in permanent blindness.

Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, offers alternatives to celebrate the holiday safely:

- Make 4th of July rockets by using paper towel rolls, paint, streamers and paper cement.
- Make pinwheels or wind socks with an Independence Day theme.
- After the sun goes down, wrap flashlights in colored cellophane to provide fun shades of light.
- Purchase non-toxic glow-sticks, ropes and jewelry that can safely light the night for kids.
- Using yarn, craft sticks, paint and construction paper, families can make the United States flag.
- Have children design and decorate their own t-shirts and hats using glow in the dark paints. Add puffy paints and glitter to make them sparkle.

“The Fourth of July can still be fun without fireworks,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “By attending only fireworks shows run by licensed professionals, and being vigilant, we can celebrate our nation’s birthday with family and friends, not in the emergency room.”

For more information on the dangers of fireworks, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020, or visit preventblindness.org/prevent-eye-injuries-fireworks.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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