Fireworks Information for a Safe Independence Holiday

The 4th of July holiday is traditionally filled with family events, celebrations and, of course, fireworks. While fireworks can be the highlight of the Independence Day holiday, it’s critical that everyone know fireworks safety information to avoid injuries or running afoul of the law.

“Fireworks can be the best part of a Fourth of July celebration for kids, yet each year hundreds of kids are permanently disfigured or worse due to burns caused by fireworks that ended up in the wrong hands,” says Dave Crozier, Safe Kids Monterey County Coordinator and Sheriff’s Department Crime Prevention Specialist. “The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to watch them at a community celebration where professionals handle them.”

Here are a few things everyone should know about fireworks:
• Sparklers are not legal in California! They are magnesium on a metal rod and have been illegal for 10 years. While often considered safe, sparklers join firecrackers and rockets as those causing the bulk of emergency room-treated injuries.

• In California, there must be a state fire marshal seal on all safe and sane fireworks.

• Simple possession of dangerous fireworks can cost a $500-$1,000 penalty plus one year in jail.

Here are examples of fireworks that are not legal and should be avoided:

• fireworks containing more than 50 milligrams of powder
• Cherry bombs
• M-80 salutes
• Large reloadable shells
• Aerial bombs
• Firecrackers containing more than two grains of powder

Mail-order kits designed to create fireworks described above are also illegal.

And remember – legal fireworks can also be harmful if not used properly, so play it safe with fireworks and have a wonderful holiday.

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Fireworks Safety Guidelines

Each local city has its own laws regarding fireworks – find out the rules where you live.

Only adults should handle fireworks. Tell children to avoid friends who are using fireworks.

Discuss safety procedure with your children. Teach children to “stop, drop and roll” if their clothes catch fire. Make sure they know how to call 9-1-1. Show them how to put out fireworks by using water or a fire extinguisher.

Read labels and carefully follow directions. All fireworks must carry a warning label describing necessary safety precautions.

Never use fireworks indoors.

Be sure spectators are out of range before lighting fireworks.

Never aim or throw fireworks at another person.

Never place your face or any other body part over fireworks.

Never try to reignite fireworks that malfunction.

Never carry fireworks in your pocket.

Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from structures, dry leaves and flammable materials.
The Information Technology Department (ITD) keeps the county connected every day, and this department also helps support getting those in our community with fewer resources connected as well.

ITD is one of the sponsors of a recent community technology event, “Get Connected Central Coast,” during which residents were able to learn digital literacy skills, purchase low-cost computers and subscribe to low-cost internet. This event took place on June 21st in Salinas and is part of a broad, regional effort to reach underserved residents in the tri-county region such as low-income families, veterans, seniors and those with disabilities. Services were provided for both English and Spanish speakers.

Twenty volunteers were on hand to assist attendees at the event. Information Technology Director Dianah Neff was on hand to help with logistics, as was retired Assistant Director Dave Dalby.

“Digital literacy and affordable access to the internet are key factors in expanding healthy, growing communities,” says Neff. “I commend the Get Connected Central Coast initiative for its outreach to those in our community with fewer resources.”

Get Connected is a project of CSU Monterey Bay's Wireless Education & Technology Center, in partnership with Hartnell College, the Monterey County Office of Education, Loaves, Fishes and Computers, and the Central Coast Broadband Consortium which includes the County’s Information Technology Department.