

Press Release

From: Mountain View Fire Protection District
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For Immediate Release

Firefighters Hope for a Safe Independence Day

Fireworks stands; you see them almost everywhere you go at this time of year and yet the items they are selling, although legal by Colorado statute, are prohibited along many parts of the Front Range, specifically in the State Parks, as well as many cities, towns and municipalities.

Regardless of the State law allowing some fireworks, Colorado State Parks have recognized the dangers and have banned them completely, including sparklers.

And although there currently is no state-wide fire ban, sparklers are not allowed in Boulder County either. The Boulder County Sheriff's office has banned all fireworks that explode, leave the ground or emit sparks.

With that said, You've heard it year after year. Leave fireworks to the professionals! This year is no different, as firefighters across the country have again begun their campaign urging spectators to enjoy professional displays where, in many cases, months of planning and preparation have been in place making safety to spectators and the reduction of fire risk paramount.

Yet, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), every year thousands of children and teens are injured across the country from accidents related to fireworks. In addition, thousands of dollars in property loss occurs because they are not used safely or properly.

"At this time of year annually, fireworks are one of the leading causes of injuries serious enough to require emergency room treatment and hospitalization. Fireworks can result in severe burns, fractures, or scars or even death or disfigurement that can last a lifetime" said Jesse Hodgson, spokesman for the Mountain view Fire Protection District.

The thousands of serious injuries each year typically harm the eyes, head, or hands. Even sparklers, which are considered by many to be harmless, reach temperatures of more than 1,000° F.

"It comes down to the responsibility of individuals and especially parents to be cautious and teach their children about fireworks safety," said Hodgson.

Hodgson and other Firefighters are hopeful that people will listen as the messages are repeated again this year.

"Each year we respond to a handful of (fireworks) incidents ranging from burns to grass and structure fires," stated Hodgson.

"Although the trend has been up and down since 1996, the good thing is that in recent years that trend appears to be decreasing. People are adhering to our messages and enjoying the professional displays" continued Hodgson.

Some of that may be accredited to the fines that could be imposed for violators of the law.

According to the Boulder County Sheriffs office, a summons with a mandatory court appearance and fines can be imposed of up to \$750.00 and six months in prison for an ordinance violation in the county.

Colorado changed the laws regarding fireworks years ago and now permits only "safe and sane" fireworks, which includes sparklers, smoke bombs and fountains.

Hodgson recommends that you check with your city or town ordinances regarding the use of fireworks within the city/town limits before buying and setting them off.

"If allowed and you choose to use fireworks, know how to use them safely," he added.

Hodgson says that Mead, Erie and Dacono, which Mountain View provides services to, don't allow for the sale of fireworks but also don't prohibit the use of them either.

"We know that we will respond to fireworks incidents this year, that's just the reality. I can only hope that someone doesn't lose a house or get injured because of it" Hodgson stated.

Tips for using fireworks from the National Council of Fireworks Safety:

USE FIREWORKS OUTDOORS ONLY.

OBEY LOCAL LAWS. IF FIREWORKS ARE NOT LEGAL WHERE YOU LIVE, DO NOT USE THEM!

ALWAYS HAVE WATER HANDY (A HOSE OR BUCKETS OF WATER)

ONLY USE FIREWORKS AS INTENDED. DON'T TRY TO ALTER THEM OR COMBINE THEM.

NEVER RE-LIGHT A "DUD" FIREWORK (WAIT 20 MINUTES AND THEN SOAK IT IN A BUCKET OF WATER)

USE COMMON SENSE WHEN USING FIREWORKS. SPECTATORS SHOULD KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE SHOOTER. AND THE SHOOTER SHOULD WEAR SAFETY GLASSES.

ALCOHOL AND FIREWORKS DO NOT MIX. HAVE A "DESIGNATED "SHOOTER

ONLY PERSONS OVER AGE 12 SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HANDLE SPARKLERS OF ANY TYPE.

DO NOT EVER USE HOMEMADE FIREWORKS OR ILLEGAL EXPLOSIVES; THEY CAN KILL YOU!
REPORT ILLEGAL EXPLOSIVES TO THE FIRE OR POLICE DEPARTMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.