

FIREWORKS SAFETY

Fireworks are a tradition during the July 4th holiday: beautifully colored sparks flying through the air in concert with thunderous reports. As exciting as this may seem, people often forget that they are playing with explosives. "Remember, fireworks are dangerous if they are used incorrectly," said Raymond Lambert, North Dakota State Fire Marshal. Exploding fireworks throw hot sparks and embers through the air and often create temperatures hotter than 1,200 degrees.

North Dakota allows the sale and use of consumer fireworks from June 27 through July 5. Nationally, fireworks have caused millions of dollars in property loss, and thousands of injuries and deaths. "The safest way to enjoy the thrill of fireworks is to let the professionals handle these products and attend a public fireworks display," advised Lambert.

If you plan to shoot your own fireworks, pay particular attention to safety tips to help reduce the chances of a destructive fire or injury:

- Purchase fireworks only from a licensed and approved dealer.
- Read and follow the directions on fireworks packages.
- Make sure adults supervise all use of fireworks. Young children should not play with fireworks. Even sparklers can cause a serious burn injury.
- Do not point or throw fireworks at people.
- Use fireworks in an open area away from dry grass and other flammable materials. Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby for emergencies.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework device when lighting the fuse. Move back a safe distance immediately after lighting.
- Light fireworks one at a time. Do not try to re-ignite fireworks. Soak fireworks that did not ignite with water. Do not attempt to repair broken fireworks.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place. Keep fireworks out of your pockets.
- Keep all unused fireworks away from the shooting area.
- Never experiment with make-shift or homemade fireworks.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.
- Avoid the combination of alcohol, drugs and fireworks.