FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRE DEPARTMENT HOLDS FIREWORKS COLLECTION

Last fall’s devastating wildfires are a grim reminder that the coming Fourth of July holiday brings with it the threat of another disaster. In an effort to reduce the risk of fire and injury, the Escondido Fire Department is launching their 14th annual fireworks collection this Friday, June 20. The effort makes sense; according to the National Fire Protection Association in a typical year, more fires are reported in the U.S. on Independence Day than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires. “The bottom line,” says Escondido Fire Chief Vic Reed, “is that we live in an extremely fire prone area and fireworks just aren’t a good mix.” Reed is optimistic that the community will again take advantage of this opportunity to surrender their fireworks; approximately 50 pounds were turned in last year.

“While property damage is one big concern, we’re also worried about injuries, stated Escondido Fire Department spokeswoman Carol Rea. One single firework mishap can cause a life-changing injury for an innocent victim, the victim’s family, and the community or it can start a fire that could burn down multiple homes, so we’re thankful for every single firework that’s turned in.”

Like the rest of San Diego County, the only fireworks allowed in Escondido are those detonated by certified professionals during public displays. All others are illegal, from fountains and
skyrockets to sparklers and snappers. “It’s not that we’re trying to take away anybody’s fun,”
added Rea, “We’re preventing the inevitable injuries that occur when explosive devices, even
those marketed as ‘safe and sane,’ wind up in the hands of amateurs – and worse, children.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control Web site, eleven people died and an estimated
9,200 were treated in emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries in the United States
in 2006. One third of those injured were children fifteen years of age and younger.

Escondido residents can turn in their fireworks, no questions asked, from 9:00 am on Friday,
June 20 until 5:00 p.m., Monday, July 7 at any of the four Escondido fire stations listed:

- Fire Station #2, 421 N. Midway Drive
- Fire Station #3, 2165 Village Road
- Fire Station #4, 3301 Bear Valley Parkway
- Fire Station #5; 2319 Felicita Road.

[Due to construction issues this year, fireworks will not be accepted at Fire Station #1, which has
been temporarily relocated away from Quince Street]

Military ordinances, dynamite, or other highly explosive materials should not be moved.

Anyone having explosives of this type should call 9-1-1 immediately so that the situation can be
evaluated and the safest course of action taken by professionals.

For more information, Escondido residents are encouraged to call the Escondido Fire
Department at (760) 839-5400. Residents of other cities are encouraged to call their own local
fire departments for more information about fireworks in their jurisdictions.

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EDITOR: Note that the following pages include data from CDC AND NFPA
How can fireworks injuries be prevented?

- The safest way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to trained professionals.

How big is the problem?

- In 2006, eleven people died and an estimated 9,200 were treated in emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries in the United States.\(^1\)
- An estimated 5% of fireworks-related injuries treated in emergency departments required hospitalization.\(^1\)

Who is most at risk for fireworks-related injuries?

- More than two-thirds of all fireworks-related injuries in 2006 occurred between June 16 and July 16. During that time period:
  - one out of every three people injured were children under 15 years of age;
  - about three times as many males were injured as females; and of young people under twenty sustained nearly half (47%) of all injuries from fireworks.\(^1\)
- People actively participating in fireworks-related activities are more frequently and severely injured than bystanders.\(^2\)

What kinds of injuries occur?

- Between June 16 and July 16, 2006:
  - The body parts most often injured were hands (2,300 injuries), eyes (1,500 injuries), and the head, face, and ear (1,400 injuries).\(^1\)
  - More than half of the injuries were burns. Burns were the most common injury to all body parts except the eyes and head areas, where contusions, lacerations and foreign bodies in the eye occurred more frequently.\(^1\)
- Fireworks can be associated with blindness, third degree burns, and permanent scarring.\(^2\)
- Fireworks can also cause life-threatening residential and motor vehicle fires.\(^1\)

What types of fireworks are associated with most injuries?

- Between June 16 and July 16, 2006:
  - Firecrackers were associated with the greatest number of estimated injuries at 1,300. There were 1,000 injuries associated with sparklers and 800 associated with rockets.\(^1\)
  - Sparklers accounted for one-third of the injuries to children less than 5 years of age.\(^1\)
• Between 2000-2005, more than one-third of the fireworks-related deaths involved professional devices that were illegally sold to consumers.³

How and why do these injuries occur?

• **Availability:** In spite of federal regulations and varying state prohibitions, many types of fireworks are still accessible to the public. Distributors often sell fireworks near state borders, where laws prohibiting sales on either side of the border may differ.

• **Fireworks type:** Among the various types of fireworks, some of which are sold legally in some states, bottle rockets can fly into peoples' faces and cause eye injuries; sparklers can ignite clothing (sparklers burn at more than 1,000°F); and firecrackers can injure the hands or face if they explode at close range.

• **Being too close:** Injuries may result from being too close to fireworks when they explode; for example, when someone leans over to look more closely at a firework that has been ignited, or when a misguided bottle rocket hits a nearby person.

• **Lack of physical coordination:** Younger children often lack the physical coordination to handle fireworks safely.

• **Curiosity:** Children are often excited and curious around fireworks, which can increase their chances of being injured (for example, when they re-examine a firecracker dud that initially fails to ignite).

• **Experimentation:** Homemade fireworks (for example, ones made of the powder from several firecrackers) can lead to dangerous and unpredictable explosions.⁴

What is the annual cost of fireworks-related injuries?

• An estimated 2,200 reported structure or vehicle fires were started by fireworks in 2004. These fires resulted in $21 million in direct property damage.⁵

What are the laws?

• Under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission prohibits the sale of the most dangerous types of fireworks and the components intended to make them. The banned fireworks include various large aerial devices, M-80s, quarter-sticks, half-sticks and other large firecrackers. Any firecracker with more than 50 milligrams of explosive powder and any aerial firework with more than 130 milligrams of flash powder is banned under federal law, as are mail order kits and components designed to build these fireworks.⁶

References


* Links to non-Federal organizations … are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the Federal Government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.
Facts and Figures from the National Fire Protection Association Web Site
www.nfpa.org

Size of the Fireworks Problem
On Independence Day in a typical year, more U.S. fires are reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires.
• In 2005, fireworks caused an estimated 1,800 total structure fires, 1,000 residential fires, and 700 vehicle fires reported to fire departments.
• These 2,500 fires resulted in an estimated 60 civilian injuries and $39 million in direct property damage. There were no reported civilian deaths.

Characteristics of Fireworks Injuries
In 2006, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,200 people for fireworks related injuries.
• 49% of 2006 emergency room fireworks-related injuries were to the extremities and 46% were to the head.
• 55% of the 2006 fireworks injuries were burns, while 30% were contusions and lacerations.
• One-third of the people injured by fireworks were under the age of 15.
• The risk of fireworks injury was two-and-a-half times as high for children ages 10-14 as for the general population.
• Sparklers, fountains, and novelties alone accounted for 28% of the emergency room fireworks injuries in 2006.

Risk of Private Fireworks Use
The risk of fire death relative to time used shows fireworks as the riskiest consumer product.
• The risk that someone will die from fire when fireworks are being used is higher relative to exposure time than the risk of fire death when a cigarette is being smoked.
• The risks with fireworks are not limited to displays, public or private. Risks also exist wherever fireworks are manufactured, transported, or stored.
• “Safe and sane” fireworks are neither. Fireworks and sparklers are designed to explode or throw off showers of hot sparks. Temperatures may exceed 1200°F.

NFPA encourages people to enjoy public displays of fireworks that comply with NFPA 1123. NFPA is strongly opposed to any consumer use of fireworks.