



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Janel Vasallo, Public Information / Education Officer

Telephone: (863) 834-8219

Cell: (863) 860-9011

Email: janel.vasallo@lakelandgov.net

The Lakeland Fire Department Reminds You to Celebrate Independence Day Safely

Lakeland, FL. June 30, 2015 – Shooting-off fireworks on Independence Day is becoming more hazardous, according to a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) study. The best available data from the CPSC study shows that in 2013, there were eight deaths and an estimated 11,400 consumers who sustained injuries related to fireworks. This represents an increase from 8,700 injuries in 2012. Sixty-five percent, or 7,400, of the injuries in 2013 occurred in the 30 days surrounding July 4.

Fireworks malfunctions and improper use are associated with the most injuries, according to the study. Injuries frequently resulted from users playing with lit fireworks or igniting fireworks while holding the device. Last year, children under age 5 experienced a higher estimated per capita injury rate than any other age group, according to the study. Past reports indicate that consumers sometimes feel comfortable handing off fireworks to children that are perceived to be less powerful, such as sparklers. Sparklers account for more than 40 percent of all estimated injuries.

The department would like to encourage everyone to leave the fireworks to professionals for a safe Independence Day celebration. However, consumers who decide to purchase **legal** fireworks (Florida law prohibits any fireworks that fly through the air or explode) are strongly encouraged to follow these safety recommendations:

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit -- hot enough to melt some metals;
- Always have an adult close by to supervise fireworks activities;
- Never place any part of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse. Back up to a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks;
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap;
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them with water and discard;
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person;
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers;
- After fireworks complete their burning, douse the spent device with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding the device to prevent a trash fire.

For more fire safety information from the department on fireworks and other important safety topics visit <http://www.lakelandgov.net/lfd/fire-safety> . Have a **SAFE** 4th of July. In the event of an emergency dial 9-1-1.

- END -

Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

701 E. Main Street Lakeland, FL 33801 | Phone (863)834-8200 | Fax (863)834-8295

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