

Facts About Fireworks Injuries



Prevent Blindness America wants all Americans to know the dangers of consumer fireworks. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the following fireworks injury statistics:

- > Fireworks devices were involved in an estimated 8,800 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2009 (the latest year for which data is available).
- > An estimated 5,900 injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms during the one-month period (June 19-July 19) surrounding the Fourth of July.
- > Eyes were the second most commonly injured part of the body, with an estimated 1,600 fireworks-related eye injuries treated in the same one-month period of 2009.
- > Firecrackers accounted for 1200 injuries, sparklers (1000) and reloadable shells (500).
- > Males accounted for 73% of fireworks injuries.
- > Of the 1000 estimated sparkler injuries, half were to children age 4 and younger.
- > 1,900 of the fireworks injuries were to children under age 15.
- > Data from the U.S. Eye Injury Registry shows that bystanders are more often injured by fireworks than operators themselves.
- > Contusions, lacerations and foreign bodies were the most common injuries to eyes.
- > In 2006, nine out of ten emergency room fireworks injuries involved fireworks that Federal regulations permit consumers to use, according to the National Fire Protection Association. "Safe and sane" fireworks cause more injuries than illegal fireworks, especially to preschool children.
- > There were 2 fireworks-related deaths in 2009.
- > Sparklers accounted for half of the eye injuries to children less than 5 years of age.



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Facts About Fireworks Injuries—Continued

Keep These Fireworks-Related Injuries in Mind

- > A 5-year-old boy was at the beach with his parents and some other children. A spark from a sparkler held by another child went into the victim's eye.
- > A 7-year-old boy and his family were watching a neighborhood fireworks show. Tubing from a parachute-type firework flew into the boy's eye. He suffered a hemorrhage of the eye and a ruptured globe. Return of his full vision is not certain.
- > A 4-year-old girl had debris and sparks from firecrackers enter her eye. She required emergency room care where her eye had to be washed out.

Our Position: Protect Your Sight by Celebrating Safely

Prevent Blindness America urges you to celebrate safely. Fireworks are extremely dangerous. Do not purchase, use or store fireworks of any type. Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks. Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

Call our toll-free hotline at **800.331.2020** to receive Safe Summer Celebrations. The booklet discusses the dangers of fireworks and offers safe alternatives. You can also request a copy of our *Fireworks Eye Injury Safety Quiz*.

Prevent Blindness America supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks, except those used in authorized public displays by licensed operators, as the only effective means of eliminating the social and economic impact of fireworks-related trauma and damage. For more on Prevent Blindness America's position on fireworks, request a copy of our complete position statement.

Source: Greene, M.A., Tv, Y., 2009 Fireworks Annual Report: Fireworks-Related Deaths, Emergency Department-Treated Injuries, and Enforcement Activities During 2009, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, June 2010. (<http://www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/2009fwreport.pdf>)

