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## Using Fireworks Safely

Summer means picnics, barbecues, parades and fireworks displays, especially around the 4th of July. Summer also means an increase in injuries from backyard grills, bonfires and fireworks. In 2006, an estimated 9,200 people were treated in emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries, 36 percent of whom were under 15 years old.

Children between the ages of 10 and 14 were at three times the risk of fireworks injuries than the general population. About a third of the injuries were from small firecrackers, 21 percent from bottle rockets and 20 percent from sparklers. In 2004, fireworks caused \$21 million in direct property damage.

The National Safety Council advises that the best way to safely enjoy this 4th of July is to watch a public fireworks display conducted by professionals.

However, if fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to use them, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Older children should use fireworks only under close adult supervision.
- Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from onlookers, houses and flammable materials.
- Light one device at a time; maintain a safe distance after lighting.
- Do not allow any running or horseplay while fireworks are being used.
- Never ignite devices in a container.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks; douse and soak them with water and discard them safely.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.