

FIREWORKS SAFETY DURING CORONAVIRUS - HELP US HELP YOU CELEBRATE 4TH OF JULY SAFELY

For Release

June 30, 2020

Rarely do we consider fireworks harmful much less deadly; yet, fireworks are one of the biggest fire dangers to life and property. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there are more reported fires on the 4th of July than on any other day of the year and 2 out of every 5 fires reported are fireworks-related.

Annually, thousands of fireworks-related injuries are treated in hospital emergency departments throughout the United States. Although Prince William County permits the use of some fireworks, restrictions apply and for good reason. No matter how breathtaking fireworks are or how easy they appear to use, they are potential fire starters. Chief Tim Keen, of the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System, encourages residents to leave fireworks demonstrations to trained professionals by enjoying larger aerial fireworks shows usually provided in the District, Maryland and Virginia (DMV); due to COVID-19, most of this year's public displays have been canceled <https://patch.com/district-columbia/washingtondc/dc-4th-july-fireworks-2020-canceled>. However, should you choose to purchase fireworks, Chief Keen recommends purchasing from a fireworks stand that has been inspected and approved by the Fire Marshal's Office. All stands in Prince William County are properly permitted to sell fireworks displayed. To view the list of 2020 permissible fireworks and approved fireworks stands, visit <https://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/FR/fmo/Pages/Permissible-Fireworks.aspx>.

To assist residents in preparation for the Fourth of July and additional festivities held throughout the summer, the Fire Marshal's Office suggests the following safety tips:

- Fireworks should only be ignited by an adult.
- Fireworks should only be used outdoors in an open space clear of spectators, buildings, vehicles, debris and flammable materials or on a driveway, sidewalk or other fire-resistant surface. Remember, fires are caused by careless handling of fireworks in areas exposed to sparks or live fireworks.
- **Keep spectators a safe distance away from permissible fireworks at a minimum of 25 feet for ground items.**
- **Keep a bucket of water handy in case sparks start a fire.**
- Be sure children around fireworks know to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches on fire.
- Deposit sparklers in a metal container as they may be stepped on while hot or lost in the grass and stepped on while playing.
- **DO NOT** place used fireworks in combustible trash cans or bags.
- **NEVER** aim or throw fireworks at another person.
- **NEVER** try to re-ignite fireworks that malfunction or fail to go off.
- **DO NOT** wear loose clothing when using fireworks.
- **NEVER** experiment or make your own fireworks.
- **NEVER** carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Leave used fireworks outside overnight before properly placing them in a trash can.
- Pets may be frightened by the noise and lights of fireworks; keep pets inside or away from the area when in use.

Illegal Fireworks

Illegal Fireworks in Prince William County without approved permits is defined as:

"Fireworks" means any firecracker, torpedo, skyrocket, or other substance or object, of whatever form or construction, that contains any explosive or inflammable compound or substance, and is intended, or commonly known as fireworks, and which explodes, rises into the air or travels laterally, or fires projectiles into the air.

If you are in possession of illegal fireworks, please contact the Prince William County Fire Marshal's Office for disposal at 703-792-6360. **DO NOT** throw them in the garbage!

Turning in illegal fireworks will not result in any fines or summons, and no questions will be asked.

For more information on fireworks safety, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at <https://www.cpsc.gov> and <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Fireworks/>.