



NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION
FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 5 COMMISSIONER SANDY JONES

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CONTACT:

Kristin Haase, Assistant to PRC Chairman Sandy Jones

Phone: (505) 827-8020

Cell: (505) 216-8569

Email: kristin.haase@state.nm.us

State Fire Marshal's Office offers fireworks safety tips to keep revelers out of the emergency room

SANTA FE, NM – The ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ of a fireworks display can quickly turn to an ‘ouch’ if things go horribly wrong.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, last year there were nearly 13,000 fireworks-related injuries nationwide. Of the injuries sustained, 70 percent were male and 30 percent were female. Half of the injured were younger than 20 years of age, and most of those were children 10 to 14. The vast majority of injuries were burns, primarily to the hands, fingers, head, face, eyes and ears.

Even the seemingly innocuous sparkler can burn at 2,000 degrees and last year caused 1,200 injuries.

The State Fire Marshal's Office, which regulates the distribution and sale of fireworks in New Mexico, says fireworks-related injury, death, and fires can be avoided by following a few safety tips:

- Read and follow label directions.
- Have an adult present when handling fireworks.
- Buy from a reliable fireworks vendor.
- Ignite fireworks outdoors.
- Have a bucket of water or garden hose handy.
- Light one firework at a time and then move back quickly.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Never reignite malfunctioning fireworks.
- Never give fireworks to small children.
- Never experiment with or attempt to make your own fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never carry fireworks in your pockets.
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.

Fire marshals say disposing fireworks properly is critical. Throwing away leftover debris, duds, or unused fireworks can be a fire hazard. The most effective way to dispose fireworks is to pick up all debris, dunk used fireworks in water for at least 15 minutes or preferably overnight, wrap soaked fireworks in plastic, and take them to a solid waste facility. Dousing fireworks in lakes, ponds, or rivers is discouraged because the chemicals are harmful to the ecosystem.

“We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday and ask people to remember lives and property can be protected by being smart and taking simple precautions in handling fireworks,” said State Fire Marshal Don Shainin.

The Public Regulation Commission (PRC) regulates the utilities, telecommunications, and motor carrier industries to ensure fair and reasonable rates, and to assure reasonable and adequate services to the public as provided by law. The PRC promotes public safety through the offices of State Fire Marshal, the Firefighter Training Academy, Pipeline Safety Bureau, and Transportation Division.