



# LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Safely: Leave the Fireworks to the Professionals**

Lakeland, FL – The Lakeland Fire Department wants to remind everyone to leave the Fireworks to the experts this Fourth of July! Shooting-off fireworks on Independence Day is becoming more hazardous than ever, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). An average of 10 deaths and over 12,000 firework-related injuries in the 30 days surrounding the holiday were reported in the CPSC's most recent study.

Fireworks malfunctions and improper use are associated with the most injuries. Injuries frequently happen due to users playing with lit fireworks or igniting fireworks while holding the device. Children under age 5 experienced a higher estimated per capita injury rate than any other age group. Too often users 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 firework related injuries.

The department only encourages fireworks to be enjoyed at professional displays, 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.

Have a **SAFE** 4<sup>th</sup> of July. In the event of an emergency dial 9-1-1.

- END -

Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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