



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

DOUGLAS E. RILEY, FIRE CHIEF
701 EAST MAIN STREET • LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33801
Phone (863) 834-8200 | Fax (863) 834-8295

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Contact: Janel Vasallo, Public Relations and Information Manager

Telephone: (863) 834-8219

Cell: (863) 860-9011

Fax: (863) 834-8222

Email: janel.vasallo@lakelandgov.net

Safe Alternatives to Fireworks this Fourth of July

Lakeland, FL – Much like many other events and celebrations in 2020, celebrating the Fourth of July will be different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Every year the Lakeland Fire Department encourages the public to leave the fireworks to the experts and to celebrate Independence Day at professional fireworks displays. Due to rising infection numbers from the coronavirus, all professional fireworks displays in the Tampa Bay area have been cancelled to avoid further spread of the virus. As a result, people may feel encouraged to take the festive displays into their own hands by turning to consumer fireworks.

The Lakeland Fire Department wants to remind the public that there is no safe way to use consumer fireworks. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments responded to an annual average of 18,500 fires caused by fireworks. Nearly half (47 percent) of the fires reported on Independence Day in the U.S. in 2019 were started by fireworks, more than any other cause of fire that day.

However, many fireworks injuries occur without a fire starting. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) there were 10,000 injuries nationwide in 2019, 12 resulting in death. “Each year, thousands of people are injured from using consumer fireworks and some of those injuries are extremely serious,” said Fire Marshal Cheryl Edwards. “Even sparklers, which are often thought of as harmless enough for children to hold, burn at 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause significant injuries.”

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.

Luckily, there are lots of just-as-fun (but way safer) options to go with this holiday. To be safe this Independence Day, stick to these suggested family-friendly alternatives this year:

- Glowsticks
- Bubbles
- Silly String
- Ribbon Wands
- Balloons
- Party Crackers
- Patriotic Pinwheels
- Patriotic Arts and Crafts
- Watching a virtual display online



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However, consumers who decide to purchase legal fireworks (Florida law prohibits any fireworks that fly or explode) are strongly encouraged to follow these safety recommendations:

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers.
- 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.

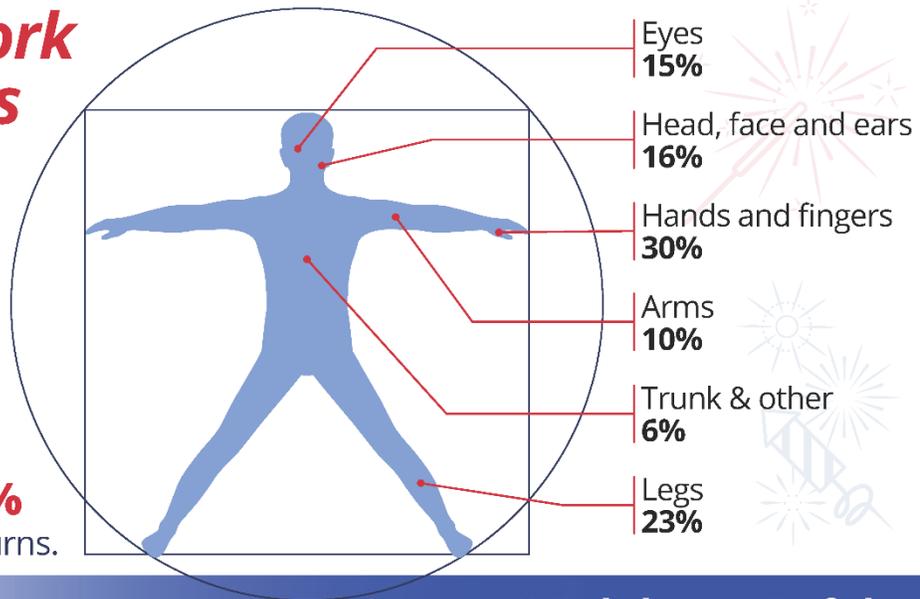
Have a SAFE fourth of July. In the event of an emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

- END -



Most Injured Body Parts

An estimated **57%** of injuries were burns.



#CelebrateSafely

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