

Dept. of Military Affairs: Celebrate Independence Day safely with tips from ReadyWisconsin

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MADISON, Wis. – People across Wisconsin will be celebrating Independence Day this upcoming weekend and many of those festivities will likely include fireworks. Whether your plans involve watching a professional display or creating your own, ReadyWisconsin encourages you to make fireworks safety a priority.

“While fireworks are present in Wisconsin throughout the year, it’s not uncommon to hear the frequent pops and booms in neighborhoods around the state during the weeks before and after the Independence Day holiday,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “For the safety of everyone around you, it is essential that you take every precaution possible to keep your celebrations safe.”

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there were a total of 167 emergency department visits in Wisconsin during 2020 that were due to fireworks-related injuries. Among those injuries, 72-percent of the victims were male and 26-percent were under the age of 18.

In addition to potential injuries, the drought-like conditions being experienced in parts of Wisconsin this year have added an extra layer of concern. Those setting off fireworks should check for any local fire danger warnings or burning restrictions that may be in effect for their area. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides regular updates about current fire dangers at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/forestfire/restrictions.asp>.

While the easiest way to remain safe is to leave fireworks to the professionals,

ReadyWisconsin offers the following advice for those who choose to set off fireworks and pyrotechnic novelties, such as sparklers and snakes, on their own:

- Only buy and use legal fireworks that are allowed in your community and only buy from reliable sellers. Permit requirements and what's considered "legal" may vary by location. Check with your municipality for more information.
- Always have water (a garden hose or a bucket) ready in case of a fire.
- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks. Even sparklers can be extremely dangerous for kids to handle.
- Adults igniting fireworks should always wear eye protection and never have any part of their body over a firework.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from buildings, dry leaves and flammable materials. Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- Never throw or point fireworks at other people or animals.
- If a firework fails to go off, never try to re-light it. Douse it with water before trying to move it.
- Keep your pets indoors to reduce the risk that they will run loose and get injured.
- Be considerate of your neighbors – especially those with pets or young children.

The Fourth of July period is also a popular time for family trips and outdoor gatherings. Keep you and your family safe with these additional tips:

- If you are traveling, pack an emergency kit in your car with items such as bottled water, snacks, and a cell phone charger. Check 511Wisconsin for traffic-related information using the free mobile app or online at [511wi.gov](https://www.511wi.gov).
- Limit your alcohol use and never get behind the wheel of a vehicle after consuming alcohol.
- Never leave a child, disabled person or pet in a parked car – even briefly. Temperatures inside a parked vehicle can climb to life-threatening levels within minutes. On an 80-degree day the temperature inside a parked car, even with windows cracked slightly open, can reach 100-degrees in less than 10 minutes.
- When cooking outdoors, remember to set up grills at least three feet away from your home or any structure that can catch fire. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby and maintain a child and pet-free safe zone around the grill while it's hot.

- When making outdoor plans, check the forecast before you head out. Carry a battery-operated weather radio and enable Wireless Emergency Alerts on your cell phone so you can receive severe weather alerts. Know where you can seek shelter in an emergency.

Find more tips on summer safety at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/-readywisconsin) for regular safety tips.