

ReadyWisconsin: Encourages safe celebrations this Independence Day weekend

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MADISON, Wis. – Independence Day is next Monday, and many people will be celebrating during the upcoming weekend. Whether your plans involve watching professional fireworks or creating your own display, ReadyWisconsin encourages you to make safety a priority.

“Independence Day celebrations are a summer tradition for many people, and fireworks are often a part of many gatherings,” said Wisconsin Emergency Management Acting Administrator Greg Engle. “Fireworks can be extremely dangerous, so it’s important that everyone use caution around them. Sometimes the best option is to leave fireworks to the professionals.”

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there were 149 fireworks-related injuries reported in the state last year, with 30 percent of those injured under the age of 18. Burns, lacerations, and other injuries to the face, eyes, and hands are among the most common risks associated with fireworks.

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend community or private events where professionals are in charge. ReadyWisconsin asks anyone who chooses to set off fireworks and pyrotechnic novelties on their own to consider the following:

- 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 <https://511wi.gov>.
- Limit your alcohol use and never get behind the wheel of a vehicle after consuming alcohol.
- Never leave people or pets 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 keep 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-free 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 notifications about severe weather. Know where you can seek shelter in an emergency.