

Facts About Fireworks Injuries



Prevent Blindness wants all Americans to know the dangers of consumer fireworks. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the following fireworks injury statistics:

- > Fireworks devices were involved in an estimated 12,900 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2017 (the latest year for which data is available).
- > An estimated 8,700 fireworks-related injuries (or 67% of the total estimated fireworks-related injuries in 2017) were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments surrounding the 4th of July period.
- > Males accounted for 70% of fireworks injuries.
- > 36% of fireworks injuries were to children under age 15.
- > Children 10 to 14 years of age had the highest estimated rate of emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries.
- > The parts of the body most often injured were hands and fingers (an estimated 31%); head, face, and ears (an estimated 22%); legs (an estimated 17%); eyes (an estimated 14%); and arms (an estimated 6%).
- > 53% of the emergency department-treated injuries were burns. Burns were the most common injury to all parts of the body, except the eyes, where contusions, lacerations, and foreign bodies in the eyes occurred more frequently.
- > There were an estimated 1,200 ER-treated injuries associated with sparklers and 800 injuries due to firecrackers.
- > There were 8 reported fireworks-related deaths in 2017.

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Facts About Fireworks Injuries—Continued

Keep These Fireworks-Related Injuries in Mind

- > An 11-year-old male dismantled several bottle rockets and packed the explosive powder into an empty mortar shell and made a fuse for it. The victim lit the fuse and waited for the firework to go off. When the fuse appeared to stop burning, the victim went to see why it would not continue burning. The firework exploded in the general vicinity of the victim's face. The victim suffered second degree burns on his face and traumatic iritis.
- > An 8-year-old boy and his mother went to a friend's house for the holiday, and they parked their car on the street. They did not realize that people were setting off fireworks across the street. As soon as they got to the curb of the sidewalk, someone lit an unspecified firework and it went off. Embers from the firework hit the victim in eyes. The victim suffered corneal abrasions. The victim's mother stated that she did not know if her son's vision will return fully.
- > A 13-year-old boy and his mother were at a friend's house, in the driveway watching fireworks. The victim looked up the sky and some ash/debris from a mortar type firework fell into his eye. The victim suffered a burn inside his eyelid.
- > An 18-year-old male was injured by a malfunctioned firework. The victim and his friend were shooting off fireworks in the yard. The victim's friend lit a multiple tube device type firework and one tube fell over. The shell shot back and hit the victim around his right eye. The victim sustained cheekbone laceration and traumatic iritis.

Our Position: Protect Your Sight by Celebrating Safely

Prevent Blindness urges you to celebrate safely. Fireworks are extremely dangerous. Do not purchase, use or store fireworks of any type. Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks. Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

Prevent Blindness supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks, except those used in authorized public displays by licensed operators, as the only effective means of eliminating the social and economic impact of fireworks-related trauma and damage.

For more on the Prevent Blindness position on fireworks, request a copy of our complete position statement.

