

Parish Health News

Firework Injury

During the summer months many people are treated on an emergency basis with hand and wrist injuries associated with various recreational activities. These may include sprains and fractures from sports injuries, cuts and lacerations from gardening or workshop projects, injuries to the hand sustained while camping and even severe finger lacerations and complete amputations that may result from lawn mowing or power tool accidents. Another seasonal type of accident is associated with consumer fireworks.



Prevention of fireworks-related injuries to the hand is important, as even a minor injury or burn from an ordinary sparkler may cause pain and discomfort for weeks as the injury heals. Injuries to the fingers and hand are the most frequently reported injury. These injuries most often will occur while attempting to light the fuse of the explosive device. The non-dominant hand (usually holding the device) is most likely to be injured, and the dominant hand (usually holding the match, lighter, etc.) is most likely to be spared from severe injury. Injured patients often report that the fuse simply burned too quickly and ignited the device before the device could be released or thrown.



Sparklers and similar wire stick devices may seem to be a safe form of patriotic celebration. However, once lighted these may burn for nearly a minute producing showering sparks that may reach temperatures of 1800 to 3000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Firework Safety Rules

- ◆ Fireworks should be unpacked from all paper packing out-of-doors and away from any open flames.
- ◆ Follow all warning labels and read precautionary information (if any) included on the fireworks package.
- ◆ Do not smoke when handling any type of firecracker, rocket or aerial display.
- ◆ Keep all fireworks away from any flammable liquids, dry grassy areas or open bonfires.
- ◆ Take note of any sudden wind change that could cause sparks or debris to fall on a car, neighboring house or spectator.
- ◆ Small children should be kept at a safe distance from the fireworks; older children that use fireworks need to be carefully supervised.
- ◆ Keep buckets of water nearby and/or a working garden hose for any fire emergency that may occur.
- ◆ Never attempt to pick up and relight a "fizzled" firework device that has failed to light or "go off".
- ◆ Do not use any aluminum or metal soda can or glass bottle to stage or hold fireworks before lighting.
- ◆ Never attempt to make your own exploding device from raw gunpowder, or similar flammable substance. The results are too unpredictable and may be devastating.

Have a safe and Happy 4th of July.
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