

# Thinking About Fireworks Safety

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As you know, we (as IPA Members), recently were collectively asked to come up with articles for the Newsletter (which has gone Dormant for about a year now), and try as I might I could not come up with anything really new to say. I thought of penning something of the newest (2016) Safety Statistics, but they aren't out yet, and if they were, there is no reason to think they have changed over the past 60 years (because they've never changed much at all).

How about the latest in anecdotal news reports from the past year? Nah - just a bunch of thrill seeking, know-nothings who happened to get hurt, innocent on-lookers who were in the wrong place at the wrong time, or those too unthinking to know they had put themselves in danger until it was too late. Same story - different year.

Fireworks are (usually) not Rocket Science. The simplest instructions are: PLACE, LIGHT, and KEEP AWAY. Easier than that - the key to Fireworks Safety is to THINK at all times. Get Trained, Use your Training to think about what you are doing, and when you are doing it. Being cognizant of the dangers to you and those around you. I know all too well of the allure Fireworks pose, and how easy it is to do it wrong or cut corners in order to make things go quicker, or make them more 'exciting'. Unfortunately, as appealing as some forms of Abuse/Misuse are - that's how most people get hurt or killed. That - and by doing something the easy way, that they know is risky, or is just plain wrong.

So, in it's simplest form, our Safety message can be reduced to - "Think". "Think" - is pretty darn basic. So why do we all spend hours and hours in classes concerning something whose entire basic message consists of the word 'think'? Well - why do we have gun safety classes to keep injury and death statistics down on those? With a gun - all you do is hold, aim, and shoot. That's pretty basic too, but Guns have now surpassed Cars as the number one killer in the U.S., and last year alone more than 32,000 people were killed by handguns. 21,000 of those were Accidental, or Self-Inflicted, and more than 11,000 were Homicides. In total, that's the staggering equivalent of approximately 7,320 YEARS worth of Fireworks injuries - every year. Just as with Guns, it is the simplicity of Fireworks that makes them so deadly. Additionally, as in the case of the thief, who illegally invades YOUR property, and gets injured/killed - YOU (as the owner) could be sued. AND; they have MANDATORY classes!

If you were making an Actuarial Comparison (an Insurance Company tool), your conclusion would show that your chances of dying in the U.S from a Gun would be 6 times those of a Canadian, 11 Times those of a German, and a whopping 40+ times that of a Brit.

But enough about dangerous products. Back to Fireworks. In U.S. Legal Terms, Fireworks pose an "Attractive Nuisance" and are Strictly Regulated. Simply put, Fireworks are a Product whose appeal is so great, that should minors and/or other untrained, unqualified, and legally forbidden people STEAL YOUR (even Legally obtained Fireworks), Use them - Injuring or Killing either themselves, or others with them - that YOU would remain (at least civilly), liable.

We know from published, U.S. Government Statistics, that these types of scenarios - despite training - have played out over and over again every year for more than 6 decades at least. *So; Guns or Fireworks, please avoid mis-using/abusing them - and - **THINK.***