

**Fireworks** - As in years past, the fourth has brought accidents. The Reports are out roundly condemning these “dangerous products” with calls to make them Illegal, to ban them altogether, ad nauseum. As is always the case, even the most casual observer of the stories, no matter how vehemently they espouse the limitations or altogether eliminating these devastating threats to our species’ very existence. You simply cannot escape the other commonalities of these accidents. Besides Fireworks (All types generically lumped together as one group), the other commonalities to these “accidents”, always include a lack of forethought, ignorance of the Dangers, a Lack of Training, and sometimes (mostly) alcohol is involved.

A quick look around the country easily proves this true.

Starting in the East:

A 22-year-old Maine man over the weekend who was killed after trying to launch fireworks off his head was one of several Independence Day-related incidents nationwide. The Man of Calais, Maine, was killed instantly Saturday when he put a reloadable fireworks mortar tube on his head. Simply, he put the fireworks on **upside-down**.. Alcohol was believed to have played a role.

- The use of fireworks on private property was legalized in Maine in 2012. This death is the first fireworks-related fatality since that time. If he were Trained and knew the Dangers - I’d have to call it a Suicide. It’s stupid to put any cake on your head and light it - but upside down?.....

Nine people in Vail, Colorado, suffered minor burns Friday night after the Fireworks exploded within the Crowd, when they didn't fire correctly.

- A “rare product malfunction” and “misfires” are being blamed for this accident, but while it could possibly be a “rare product malfunction”, it could most certainly NOT be caused by misfires. Misfires are Shells which DO NOT go off. No matter what, this was a setup problem.

A 24-year-old man in Dania Beach, Florida, lost his hand Saturday while lighting fireworks outside of his home, according to the Broward County Police Department public (mis)information officer.

- The Firework in question blew the man’s hand off because it was still in his hand when it went off.

No one was injured, but on June 25, a large firework exploded inside a West Park (Dania Beach, FL again), apartment building. In the blast, 30 of the building's windows were blown out and multiple fire doors were damaged.

- Not much comment here but - Seriously? INSIDE a building?

Also in South Florida, New York Giants defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul reportedly suffered a hand injury while lighting fireworks Saturday. NJ.com reports that he injured his thumb and a few fingers, and that doctors are still determining the severity although no permanent damage is expected. Bystanders reported that the 24-year-old man was holding the firework in his hand when it went off.

- Again - it was in his hand (did not get thrown like it was supposed to have been), when it went off. Blame the Firework - obviously it was to blame.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, an average of 230 people are in the emergency room each day in the month around Independence Day. According to the Fireworks Information Center on [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), hand and finger injuries are the most common, with face and ear injuries being the second most common. More than 50% of fireworks injuries are burns.

- (Subtle Sarcastic Hint Here: You have to be near them when you light them and you have to remain near them to be burned). Fireworks to Blame here?

The Consumer Products Safety Commission said there were 11 firework-related fatalities last year in the United States.

- Guess what? While I feel terrible for the Victims and their Families, the pattern still held. SOMEONE screwed up.

In Parrish, FL a mortar-style launch of a rocket went awry over the weekend when it fell over and shot horizontally, injuring two people, one of them seriously. Jeffrey TeMarco, 29, the pyrotechnic genius allegedly involved, was unhurt but he has been charged.

- There is a very good reason, we train EVERYBODY to not Shoot Rockets EVER in a Public Show - you never know where they will go - but obviously this Rocket (if it really was a Rocket), and ALL Rockets should be Blamed when people get hurt by them.

Two boys were injured after igniting fireworks in Dorchester, Massachusetts. A 9-year-old Boy lost a hand in the incident.

- Other than the fact that the first boy was only 9, and the second boy was only 5, and the fact that the parents were not present (nor was any adult), details about the second boy are still being investigated, but one lost a hand, and both suffered burns to their hands and face.

So far, we have covered on the far Eastern part of the country, but I have no doubt that our “push Westward” will maintain the “pattern” shown. Let’s just see:

A 41-year-old Marion, IN man was killed in a firework-related incident Saturday when he checked on a firework shell that hadn’t fired when it was supposed to. The Man had extensive facial injuries and died of his injuries at the Hospital.

- He broke the number one rule we teach - NEVER - look down the Tube!.

“An awful lot of these injuries are associated with people who’ve had too much to drink or are using drugs,” a Doctor at the treating Hospital was quoted as saying.

- GEE - Really? Who would have EVER thought that, I wonder?

In West Virginia, State Police are investigating a fireworks accident that injured two men in Monongalia County. State police tell media outlets that 1 Man of Morgantown and 1 Man of Lake Lynn, Pennsylvania, suffered non-life threatening injuries. They were both taken to a Hospital in Morgantown. State Police say the men were injured when a mortar firework exploded at a residence in Cheat Lake around 10 p.m. Saturday.

- INSIDE a Residence - OK.

Here in Iowa, a 28 yo Winterset man sustained injuries to his face, neck, and arm after the explosive blew up near his face. According to witnesses, the man was holding the mortar tube above his head. They said it was the concrete (??) plug in the bottom of the mortar that struck the Man in the face as the firecracker exploded. Besides the fact that the words “Mortar Tube” and “Firecracker do not belong in the same sentence:

- Holding a Mortar Tube above his head - lit. -sigh-

In Iowa City (my home town), in Johnson County, WXYZ-TV (Channel 7 in Detroit, MI), their Chief Meteorologist was seriously injured in a fireworks accident while vacationing with his family. The accident, which happened on Friday night, caused him to lose sight in his left eye. No other details were available, but this was NOT at the Public Display (which was on Saturday).

(Sorry - Just noticed this was in 2014)

In Kansas City: A Man and his 4-year-old son are among the more serious cases of fireworks injuries in Kansas this year. A Kansas State Highway Patrol trooper says the Man & son were on their way home from a family outing Sunday, when artillery shells in the car somehow exploded. A Woman passerby saw it happen on the Oakland Expressway near Topeka and called 9-1-1

- Fireworks IN the Passenger compartment of a car - what could go wrong there?

In Kansas City 21 cases (including the previous 2), were reported Most were burns.

- Light Fuse, (and immediately) move away.

In Avon, CO, the Fireworks Display (from the extremely crappy video of it), seemed to be within 100' of the Crowd - it is obvious that this did NOT meet any kind of Code. I don't know what other Law and/or Code Violations they may have had there, but as they say - this was an accident looking for a place to happen - and; it found one.

In Rural Johnson County (Texas), 2 people were reportedly injured in separate incidents. A Woman suffered second and third degree burns when a firework device reportedly somehow lighted "under her" (meaning she was "over" it?) and a Man in Collin County, TX had part of his hand blown off. No other information on that one had been found yet.

I don't think we need to go further. So far we have:

- ◆ A Fireworks Device (a Cake), upside down, on a Man's head.
- ◆ A way-improperly setup Fireworks Display that went wrong.
- ◆ A group listing of nearly 23 of these people burned by, holding fireworks and/or losing body parts.
- ◆ 2 Minors - Left unattended with Fireworks, not knowing how to use them - getting hurt.
- ◆ A Man who looked down a Tube to see if a Firework would shoot out of it - and it did.
- ◆ 2 People with Fireworks inside their car that were burned.
- ◆ Several who have set things off inside their homes and got hurt or worse.
- ◆ A few were "over" the Fireworks.

This happens year after year. If you look at the reports, and really read them, what you find is not that Fireworks are Inherently Dangerous, but that People - Ignorant of the Dangers - untrained on the use of Fireworks - cause the problems.

Don't blame the instrument - blame the Mis-use and Abuse of the Instrument. Just as a gun in the wrong hands is a Danger to all - so to is a Firework - and just as much to Blame.

Rant over - time to get ready for next year's crop.

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