

Fireworks Related Injuries - 2018

OK - so I've known and been telling you all for many years now that not much ever changes in Fireworks. I decided to go back, take a look at some years-old data with the latest (which at this writing is 2016). They used to only be a year behind - now it seems they are 2 behind. In our age of instant world-wide information, there really isn't an excuse for that, but it is what it is, I guess.

OK so I went back and reviewed 2015. It read like most years. 2015 had 11 deaths. Of those 11 deaths - every one - was preventable. 4 had alcohol involved - 2 more suspected - 4 placed mortars atop their heads and lit the fuse - 1 was a "prank" and the victim had a firework "tossed at" him. 4 placed, or held the mortar on or near their chest/head/neck. 1 - was a mad bomber who blew himself up making M-80 type Fireworks, and 2 held the Firework in their hands while they lit it.

By now, you should be noticing a theme. The same theme I've been harping on since the '90s. you NEVER but NEVER "Play" with Fireworks. That's it, pretty much one rule. Put another way - it's "Use as Directed". 3 words. Yes, I know - way too wordy, but...

OK, it's just a bit more complicated than that. I very strongly suggest that EVERYONE get a little training/experience under their belts first. This can literally be at any age where they can read/write and have just a smattering of understanding. Unfortunately, that leaves out approximately a dozen who will die this year, and about 600 to 1,000 who will become injured (see my article; "The Constant of Idiocy") on this page, as well.

This is enormously easy to do. Attend one of our bi-monthly meetings of the IPA. Attend the Annual PGI Convention. Take one of the 2 Dozen or so PGI Classes given at various parts of the US, and at the Convention each year. Network with TRUSTWORTHY, SAFETY-MINDED, PROFESSIONALS, OR SEASONED HOBBYISTS.

OK, on to our comparison. Going back almost 20 years to 1999; we had 16 Deaths in 1999, 12,500 Injuries. It is important to note, that prior to 1999, Fireworks Statistics were "lumped" together with many other types of consumer products making direct comparisons with prior years difficult, if not impossible. In subsequent years, Annual Fireworks in roughly the same format as today have become available and the standard used by the CPSC for reporting on the Industry.

The Industry was not nearly as big back then either. One interesting fact is we used approximately 200 MILLION TONS! - less product per year than we do today. So, what do we attribute the differences to? We had 16 Deaths vs. 7. We have 12,500 Injuries vs. 11,000 in FY '99, yet we used 200+ TONS more product! One factor (one that I very strongly believe in) is much increased consumer/hobbyist training. The PGI course was first developed in late '98 and we are now in our 20th year, and the 6th revision of the program. Offshoots of the program, which has taught 1,000s of Professionals and Hobbyists alike have expanded to include Bomb Squad Technicians, Proximate Users, as well as those from around the World. Also; with the vast increase in usage, comes better technique and equipment, the advent and current State of the Art in E-firing which removes the Shooter from the Shoot Site Proper.

The rise of Hobbyist Clubs like The CrackerJacks, The Rocky Mountain Pyro Assoc., The PGI, The Iowa Pyrotechnic Assoc., FPAG, WPAG, MPAG, The Fireants, The Stumptown Shooters and dozens more disseminate the information/techniques that keep Shooters Safe. Even if you don't want to join a Club - I urge anyone/everyone to Network with knowledgeable Professionals, attend local Club Meetings as guests, attend an event where they actually discuss how Fireworks work (like Boomtown, Vinton, IA)

Please look around this site, read the articles, take advantage of the free/downloadable PowerPoint Presentations, contact us - write emails - ask questions - but train.