

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Advocates Vigilance in Preventing Fires & Injuries *Fireworks Safety Urged for this Fourth of July*

Sacramento – As we roll into the Fourth of July holiday weekend, hot, dry and windy conditions are once again expected and CAL FIRE is reminding everyone to do their part in preventing fires and injuries caused by fireworks. NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) states that throughout the nation over the last several years that approximately half of the reported fires on the Fourth of July were started by fireworks. Many of the incidents during this time in California are related to either the use of illegal fireworks or state-approved fireworks that are used incorrectly. Remember: just because it says “safe” doesn’t necessarily mean it is if they are used incorrectly, and it takes personal responsibility on the part of all of us to make this Fourth of July holiday fire and injury free.

“Wildfire activity has significantly increased during the last several weeks and California continues to experience volatile, unstable fire conditions,” said Chief Ken Pimott, CAL FIRE director. “Everyone needs to understand the dangers associated with the use of illegal fireworks or misuse of legal fireworks. Any person who starts a fire from fireworks – even accidentally – can be held liable for the fire suppression costs as well as property damage costs. Possession of illegal fireworks such as sky rockets, bottle rockets, roman candles, aerial shells, firecrackers and other types that explode, go into the air, or move on the ground in an uncontrollable manner can lead to a possible fine of up to \$50,000 as well as prison time or jail for up to one year.” Even “Safe and Sane” fireworks used in a community where they are banned are illegal.

With California’s stringent fireworks laws and the need for increased enforcement, education, and disposal of illegal fireworks, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. included in the 2018-19 Budget an increase in funding to stop the use of illegal fireworks in California. The Administration is actively working with the Legislature on a solution, which would provide a long-term funding fix for the disposal of confiscated illegal fireworks. “The use and sale of illegal fireworks has skyrocketed in California,” said California State Fire Marshal Dennis Mathisen. “We have been focused on developing a solution to support fireworks enforcement, education and disposal. Even using ‘Safe and Sane’ fireworks can be dangerous if used improperly,” said Mathisen. “When fireworks are used illegally or in an unsafe manner they can pose a serious threat to life and property. Don’t let a moment of entertainment turn into tragedy.”

Here are a few tips to help you be safe this Fourth of July:

- If fireworks are not legal where you live, do not use them.
- Buy only State Fire Marshal-approved (Safe and Sane) fireworks where legal.
- Have a bucket of water and a hose handy in case of a fire.
- Always read directions and have an adult present.
- Only use fireworks outdoors.

- Parents are liable for any damage or injuries caused by their children using fireworks.
- Use common sense and keep a safe distance.
- Never attempt to re-light or “fix” fireworks.
- Sparklers can reach temperatures over 1,000°F, don’t give them to children.
- Better yet, leave the show to the experts at an organized event.

CAL FIRE has already responded to more than 2,350 wildland fires this year (January-June 2018). Residents are urged to visit www.ReadyforWildfire.org for tips on how to prepare their homes and family for wildfire.

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MEDIA NOTES:

For graphics, visit: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Fireworks-Safety/>

Fireworks Public Service Announcement: <https://calfire.box.com/s/okv0ztkxs1jjxf5aewig1d4q8l0dowu7>