

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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### **CAL FIRE Warns of Dangers as 4<sup>th</sup> of July Approaches**

#### *Fireworks Safety Urged for the Holiday Weekend*

**Sacramento** – Fourth of July is synonymous for sun, fun, barbequing, and fireworks. CAL FIRE is reminding everyone to do their part to have a safe holiday and help prevent wildfires and injuries caused by fireworks. Two out of five fires on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July are caused by fireworks, more than any other cause of fires. Most of these incidents are related to the use of illegal fireworks as well as state-approved fireworks that are handled and or lit incorrectly. Sparklers, which are illegal in California, can reach temperatures of 1200 degrees, account for roughly 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries.

"With the significant rains, and now the dry, warmer months, wildfire activity is quickly picking up," said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE director. "Residents need to understand the dangers associated with the use of illegal fireworks or misuse of legal fireworks. Here in California we have a zero tolerance for the use and sale of illegal fireworks. Any person can be held liable for the fire-fighting costs as well as property damage costs associated with the start of a wildfire."

There are also legal ramifications when it comes to certain types of fireworks. 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 taken into a city or county where they are banned are considered illegal. The State Fire Marshal approved "Safe and Sane" fireworks are allowed for use in many communities; however, they are not approved state-wide. Before purchasing these types of fireworks, be sure to check your local ordinances and follow the instructions to avoid accidents and injuries.

"Please do not risk your safety and safety of others by using illegal and dangerous fireworks. Use only State-approved "Safe and Sane" fireworks or attend public display fireworks shows in your community conducted by licensed professional," said Chief Richwine, Acting State Fire Marshal.

Safe and Sane Fireworks are only as safe as they are used. CAL FIRE wants everyone to enjoy their celebrations in a safe and legal manner. Here are a few tips to help you be safe this 4th of July:

- If fireworks are not legal where you live, do not use them.
- Buy only State Fire Marshal-approved (Safe and Sane) fireworks.
- Have a bucket of water and a hose handy in case of a fire.
- Always read directions and have an adult present.
- Use fireworks outdoors only.
- 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.
- State approved handheld devices can reach high temperature, don't give them to children. Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

CAL FIRE has already responded to more than 1,795 wildland fires this year (January 1-June 30 2019). Residents are urged to visit [www.ReadyforWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyforWildfire.org) for tips on how to prepare their homes and family for wildfire.

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