

Script – Broadcast – Red, white and boom – safely

INTRO

It won't be long before it's the Fourth of July and we hear the whistling and thunderous booms of fireworks streaking through the sky.

And while "consumer" fireworks such as bottle rockets, skyrocketers and roman candles are illegal in Illinois, according to the state's [Pyrotechnic Use Act](#), others are considered non-consumer fireworks including sparklers, smoke bombs and party poppers. But that doesn't make them completely safe.

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In 2023, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) received approximately 9,700 reports of injuries and eight deaths because of fireworks. And it's not just injuries that happen on July 4. According to CPSC, 66% of injuries happened before and after the holiday.

Stathis Poulakidas, MD, the burn center medical director at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, says the number of injuries reported is probably low, given the number of people who don't immediately seek treatment.

((SOT))

Dr. Stathis (STAY-THIS) Poulakidas (POLE-UH-KEEDAS), medical director, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center Burn Unit, Rockford, IL.

"The simplest of fireworks, which anybody would think is a sparkler, can burn up to 1,800 degrees," says Dr. Poulakidas. "The first thing everybody wants to do is hand the baby the sparkler and say, 'go ahead. Run around and have a good time.' But then it falls to their shoes, they burn horrifically. So not even the simplest of fireworks is safe." (:18)

TAG

Another problem is the combination of adults drinking alcohol while handling fireworks. Dr. Poulakidas says this lethal mix puts you and those around you at your gathering in danger.

According to the CPSC, 41% of the injuries were to the head, eyes, face and ears. Another 35% are hands and fingers; 42% of injuries were burns. And if clothing catches on fire, Dr. Poulakidas says there's a greater likelihood of second degree burns to your chest, arms and legs, which could lead to treatment options that include skin grafting.

Fireworks Safety Tips (courtesy of CPSC)

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- Keep a bucket of water or garden hose handy in case of fire.
- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that haven't fully ignited.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol.