**The fourth of July might look different this year with social distancing and fewer public events, but our message is the same. Fireworks are dangerous.**

**We know this year in particular has been hard for families, and we all want to celebrate this great country. Your local fire fighters ask that you do not take fireworks into your own hands and backyards - even as shows are cancelled. Nothing is worth the safety of your friends and family.**

Every year, Americans celebrate the Fourth of July with fireworks and sparklers. While these homemade displays are a great way to commemorate our nation’s independence, they are also a great way to wind up in the emergency room or making a call to the fire department.

That’s why fire fighters suggest that you leave the firework displays to the professionals and view them from a distance.

Thousands of our neighbors are injured every year by fireworks and sparklers. Yes, sparklers. Those pyrotechnics on the end of a stick are pretty to look at, but they are especially dangerous. Sparklers can burn at temperatures of more than 1,000 degrees. Considering that these are often casually given to children to wave with little warning or instruction, it is easy to understand why nearly 1,200 children were treated in the hospital for sparkler injuries as recently as 2017.\*

Many Fourth of July celebrations also include increased use of firecrackers or bottle rockets. While not as large as you might consider fireworks, these tiny explosives can also be very dangerous, sending nearly 1,000 people to the emergency department in 2018.\*\*

Most injuries involve hands and fingers. In 2017 and 2018, 27-31 percent of reported injuries were to hands and fingers, including burns and trauma, major trauma (loss of fingers in some instances). It is important to note that injuries to eyes are also a major concern with fireworks.

Local laws differ on fireworks. Make sure you know your law – not just state law but local laws, as well. You may be surprised that your community has outlawed fireworks, unless done by a professional.

Another consideration before planning your Fourth of July celebration is that the booms and flashes from fireworks, firecrackers and bottle rockets may be a source of stress for some members of the community. Loud noises can be a trigger for some veterans and others struggling with post-traumatic stress.

Pets are also affected by do-it-yourself Fourth of July extravaganzas as they are especially vulnerable to sparklers, bottle rockets and firecrackers. Many pets also are unfamiliar with the sounds of the explosions and may suffer needless anxiety.

Your fire fighters understand the desire to celebrate the Fourth of July with family and friends. We will likely be doing the same, but while firing up the grill and enjoying a cold drink are all great for your party at home, fireworks of all kinds should be avoided. Leave the fireworks to the professionals.

\* <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Fireworks_Report_2017.pdf>

\*\* <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Fireworks_Report_2018.pdf>