

## **Watch the Fourth of July Fireworks Displays Safely**

### **Leave Fireworks to the Professionals**

Fireworks are exciting, fun and spectacular, but decades of experience have taught us they are dangerous and should be left to firework handlers. Thousands of accidents each year tell us that fireworks are dangerous. Every Fourth of July period fireworks send approximately 11,000 individuals to the emergency room and 18 percent of these visits involve injury to the eye.

The typical victim is a teenager, at home, unsupervised, playing with a group of friends. The chances are great that one of them will end up in the emergency room with an injury to the head, eyes or hand. Injuring an eye or losing a finger is a tragic price to pay for a few minutes of fun with fireworks.

In an effort to reduce these preventable injuries, Eye M.D.s across America encourage families to attend local public fireworks displays instead of using fireworks at home this Fourth. This recommendation is made as part of Fireworks Eye Safety Month sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Attending a professional public fireworks display is a safe way to honor our nation.

Although illegal fireworks, bottle rockets and Roman candles account for the majority of injuries. Seemingly harmless sparklers also cause numerous injuries each year. Sparklers account for the most injuries to children under the age of five. Fascinated by the bright sparks, children find these sticks of fire - burning as hot as 1,800 degrees, hot enough to melt gold - irresistible to touch.

The safest and most spectacular way to view fireworks is to attend a professionally produced, community sponsored display. Please play it safe this year and let the professionals handle the fireworks.