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Fireworks Safety A Must for July 4 Holiday

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Fireworks are included in many summer holiday celebrations, especially the Fourth of July, but people need to remember how to use them safely if they plan to use them at all.

“They are exciting, festive and fun, but they are illegal in many areas and dangerous if not handled properly,” Douglas County Health Director Dr. Adi Pour said. “This time of the year around the Fourth of July is a particular concern.”

Kay Farrell, President and CEO of the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter, said children are the top safety priority and stressed that our residents should take advantage of the many wonderful public fireworks displays.

“Not only are children excited and curious around fireworks,” she said, “Many younger children may lack the coordination to use even legal fireworks safely. Sparklers are a big concern and parents must supervise their children closely.”

The Omaha Fire Department offered the following information:

- In 2006, fireworks caused an estimated 32,600 reported fires, including 1,700 total structure fires, 600 vehicle fires, and 30,300 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in an estimated six civilian deaths, 70 civilian injuries and \$34 million in direct property damage.
- In 2007, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,800 people for fireworks related injuries; 56 percent of 2007 emergency room fireworks-related injuries were to the extremities and 36 percent were to the head.
- The risk of fireworks injury was two-and-a-half times as high for children ages 5-9 or 10-14 as for the general population.
- On Independence Day in a typical year, more U.S. fires are reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires

If you are using fireworks, it is advised that you keep water nearby. Even fireworks that are legal in some areas can cause injury, so please following directions and don't use homemade fireworks. Many injuries are caused by people being too close to the fireworks.

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