

News Release, November 17, 2010

The National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter hosted a press conference on Wednesday, November 17, 2010, where proposed changes to Omaha's fireworks ordinance were announced by City Council President Garry Gernandt.

The Omaha City Council is expected to pass the proposal which will harmonize the City of Omaha ordinance with the State of Nebraska regulations and allow for the sale of fireworks inside Omaha city limits by 20 non-profits groups. The groups will have to go through an application process and buy a permit if they are chosen.

The Safety Council is excited to be providing fireworks safety education to the community. Mayor Jim Suttle, City Council president Garry Gernandt, Police Chief Alex Hayes, Fire Chief Michael McDonald and Safety Council president Kay Farrell have all pledged to work in collaboration to reduce the number of firework injuries and educate citizens on best practices regarding fireworks.

The Safety Council's position is that fireworks are unsafe and anyone using them must get an education in safety. The best way to celebrate is to enjoy watching a fireworks show put on by trained professionals.

If people choose to light off fireworks at home, there are guidelines they should follow.

- Only use fireworks where they are legal. Only use fireworks that are legal where you are shooting them, and be sure you are shooting on dates that are legal in your city. Don't import fireworks from another state or city to use locally. Buy locally to be sure fireworks are both legal and safe.
- Use fireworks outdoors only. This includes sparklers and snakes. All fireworks burn, and can quickly start a house fire. When outdoors, be sure there is enough room to point fireworks away from spectators, houses, buildings and flammable materials.
- Always have water handy, for example a bucket or hose.
- Have a first aid kit ready and waiting.
- Keep young children away from fireworks – even sparklers! Children using fireworks should be at least 12 years old, and always closely supervised. 20% of fireworks injuries to children are caused by sparklers!
- Use fireworks the way they were intended. Follow the lighting instructions on the package. Don't combine or modify fireworks.
- Don't try to relight duds. Wait up to 20 minutes before handling a dud, then soak it in water before disposing.
- Use a designated shooter who is alcohol free and wearing safety glasses! Light one device at a time and keep a safe distance once firework is lit. Don't light fireworks in containers.
- Don't allow running or horseplay by anyone near fireworks.

Watch for more information to come from the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter. Our goal is zero accidents and zero injuries!