

READYWISCONSIN RELEASE: Keep Independence Day celebrations safe by using caution with fireworks

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For immediate release <https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/wemnews/2020wemnews/ready200626>

June 26, 2020

MADISON, Wis. – As the Independence Day holiday approaches, ReadyWisconsin is encouraging everyone to keep their celebrations safe this summer.

“With several communities canceling their public Independence Day events this year due to concerns about COVID-19, many people may think it’s a good idea to set off their own fireworks to celebrate,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “Fireworks can be extremely dangerous if not used properly, and there’s a good reason large displays are best left to the professionals. While it may be hard to imagine an Independence Day without fireworks, don’t jeopardize the safety of those around you.”

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there were 91 total emergency department visits in the state during 2019 due to fireworks-related injuries. Of those, 70 percent of patients were males, while 25 percent were under the age of 18. Nationally, the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission says an average of 180 people go to emergency departments with fireworks-related injuries every day in the month around the July 4th holiday.

The easiest way to stay safe is to watch community fireworks shows run by professionals. However, if you choose to set off your own fireworks, ReadyWisconsin encourages you to consider the following safety tips:

- Only buy and use legal fireworks that are allowed in your community, and only buy from reliable sellers.
- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks. Even sparklers can be extremely dangerous for kids to handle.
- Adults igniting the fireworks should always wear eye protection and never have any part of their body over a firework.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Always have water (a garden hose or a bucket) ready in case of a fire.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from buildings, dry leaves and flammable materials. Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- Never throw or point fireworks at other people or animals.
- Keep your pets indoors to reduce the risk that they will run loose and get injured.
- Be considerate of your neighbors – especially those with pets or young children.

In addition to fireworks safety, ReadyWisconsin offers these additional tips ahead of the Independence Day holiday:

- If you are attending a public gathering, wear a mask. Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- While you are out celebrating, remember to drink plenty of water. Limit your alcohol use and never get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol.
- If you are traveling, pack an emergency kit in your car with items such as bottled water, snacks, and a cell phone charger. Check 511Wisconsin for traffic-related information using the free mobile app or online at 511wi.gov.
- Never leave a child, disabled person or pet in a parked car – even briefly. Temperatures can become life threatening within minutes. On an 80-degree day the temperature inside a car, even with windows cracked slightly open, can reach 100 degrees in less than 10 minutes.
- When cooking outdoors, remember to set up grills away from your home or any structure that can catch fire. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby and keep a child-free safe zone around the grill while it's hot.
- When spending the day outdoors, make sure you know the forecast before you head out. Carry a battery-operated weather radio so you can receive alerts about any severe weather in your area.

Find more tips on summer safety at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/readywisconsin) for regular safety tips and updates on severe weather.

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