

ALLIANCE TO STOP CONSUMER FIREWORKS

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Leading health and fire safety advocates take aim at consumer fireworks

NFPA report says thousands of injuries and fires attributed to consumer fireworks

Urging the public to stay away from what they say is an extremely dangerous product, national health and fire safety advocates joined District of Columbia fire officials at a press conference today to denounce the use of consumer fireworks and launch new PSAs in advance of the Fourth of July holiday.

DC Fire and EMS Chief Dennis Rubin, speaking at Engine 3, voiced his concern about the upcoming holiday, “Each year our firefighters battle blazes and respond to injuries that don’t need to occur. Fireworks in untrained hands are an accident waiting to happen.” Chief Rubin also expressed his disappointment that a recent proposal before the city council to ban consumer fireworks failed to pass. “Absent their action, the public should act by staying away from consumer fireworks.”

According to a recently released NFPA report, fireworks caused an estimated 1800 total structure fires and 700 vehicle fires reported to fire departments in 2005. These fires resulted in \$39 million in direct property damage. The NFPA report said US hospital emergency rooms treated more than 9,000 people for fireworks related injuries in 2006.

“There is simply no safe way to use consumer fireworks,” said James M. Shannon, president of the National Fire Protection Association, (NFPA), a founding member of the Alliance to Stop Consumer Fireworks. “People should leave fireworks to the professionals and celebrate our nation’s birthday by enjoying professional displays put on by trained individuals.”

John Dean, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals said the Fourth of July is a particularly difficult day for fire service all across the country. “More fires are reported on a typical Fourth of July than on any other day of the year and fireworks account for half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires.”

NFPA and the Alliance to Stop Consumer Fireworks unveiled two PSAs they hope will reach the public over the next few weeks and make individuals think before lighting a firework that can have life altering consequences. One of the PSA’s features stories of people who have been directly affected by fireworks accidents including the Shannon’s of North Carolina, who lost their son Michael when a device tipped over while firing and struck him in the head.

The PSAs can be viewed on YouTube and at www.nfpa.org/fireworks.

About the Alliance

NFPA along with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), founded the Alliance to Stop Consumer Fireworks to warn individuals about the dangers of consumer fireworks. Other members include - American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association of Public Health Physicians, American Burn Association, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery, Center for Injury Research & Policy, Emergency Nurses Association, Fire Department Safety Officers Association, International Association of Arson Investigators, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Fire Fighters, International Fire Marshals Association, Metropolitan Fire Chiefs, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Association of School Nurses, National Association of State Fire Marshals, and Prevent Blindness America.

About NFPA

NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building, and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing, and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training and education. Visit NFPA's Web site at www.nfpa.org.