

Uncle Sam
Wants You



To Be Safe!



The Safety Corner

From the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

July 4, 2008



This Issue of the Safety Corner Highlights Grilling and Fireworks Safety.

From the Director: Oh, the joys of summer; cookouts, parades, and fireworks displays, especially around the 4th of July. Summer also means extended daylight hours, visiting friends and relatives, swimming, boating, or just participating in outdoor activities. Unfortunately, with extended daylight hours and holidays, there is also an increase in injuries associated with fireworks and other outdoor activities such as barbequing.

I can remember as a kid getting excited about the 4th of July, not because it's the celebration of our nation's birthday, but because the city put on an outstanding two-hour fireworks display. Fireworks add a little flavor to the celebration, but they can be dangerous, and good times can go bad in seconds. Don't let safety be an afterthought when planning your 4th of July celebrations. Follow proper safety precautions when handling fireworks (or grilling your 4th of July masterpiece), it can mean the difference between life and death.

The tips outlined in this newsletter can help keep you and your family safe when handling fireworks or grilling. You are welcome to pass on and post this newsletter for widest dissemination. Log on the www.mccll.usmc.mil <[file://www.mccll.usmc.mil](http://www.mccll.usmc.mil)> website to download previous editions of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned Safety Corner as well as our Monthly Newsletters. I look forward to your comments, so we can raise awareness, reduce risk and maintain a high level of readiness.

Semper Fidelis,

Col Monte Dunard, Director MCCLL

We welcome suggestions and comments on this Safety Corner. Please send your comments via e-mail to **feedback**, or you may contact us at (703) 432-1279.

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Did You Know?

The Pledge of Allegiance received official recognition by Congress in an Act approved on June 22, 1942.

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Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned
Safety Corner

Fireworks Safety Tips

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 8,800 people were treated for fireworks-related injuries in 2002. During the past 10 years, about a third of the injuries associated with fireworks have been caused by illegal explosives or home-made fireworks.

- Check local laws. Make sure that fireworks are legal where you live.
- If they are legal, know what kinds are legal and what kinds aren't.



- Don't let small children play with fireworks or set them off. Adults should either ignite the fireworks, or supervise

older children who are doing it.

- Read the warnings, rules and instructions. Then, after you read them, follow them to the letter.
- Wear eye protection and keep all parts of your body out of the line of fire.

- Make sure the audience is out of range of misfired or misdirected rockets and roman candles.
- Set off the fireworks on a hard, flat surface away from anything flammable.
- Wait several minutes before walking up to a firework that didn't go off. Don't try to re-light duds or misfires. Soak them in water.
- Have a bucket of water or a garden hose handy.
- Buy fireworks from reliable retailers.
- Never experiment with fireworks or try to make homemade ones.
- Avoid storing fireworks for extended periods. If you must store them, keep them in a cool, dry place.
- When the show is over, soak the expended fireworks and dispose of them in a trash container.
- M-80s and "blockbusters" are not legal fireworks; they are dangerous, banned explosives. They are extremely dangerous. Avoid anything that isn't

clearly labeled with the name of the product, the manufacturer's name and instructions for proper use.



If you attend a professional display:

- You don't need to get close. The best view is from several hundred yards away.
- If debris falls nearby, don't touch it.
- Leave pets at home. Dogs, in particular, can have their hearing damaged by the explosions.

Examples of Typical Mishap Reports Received at the Naval Safety Center

Each July Fourth, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks. Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks - devastating burns, other injuries, fires, and even death. The Alliance to Stop Consumer Fireworks is a group of health and safety organizations, coordinated by National Fire Protection Association, that urges the public to avoid the use of consumer fireworks and instead, to enjoy displays of fireworks conducted by trained professionals.

the burning phosphorous.

- A PO was sitting on a bench in front of a grocery store when a 14-year-old ran past and threw a lit firecracker into his lap. As he was trying to throw the firecracker away it exploded, injuring his hand and breaking his finger.
- An AA was lighting a firecracker from a cigarette held by a buddy. The firecracker exploded. The AA lost the end of his finger, severely cut his hand, received second degree burns to his stomach and powder burns to his chin and neck.
- An airman was at a friend's house, celebrating the Fourth. As he bent down to pick-up something off the ground, someone fired a bottle rocket at him. He was hit in the eye. Fortunately, he regained his sight.

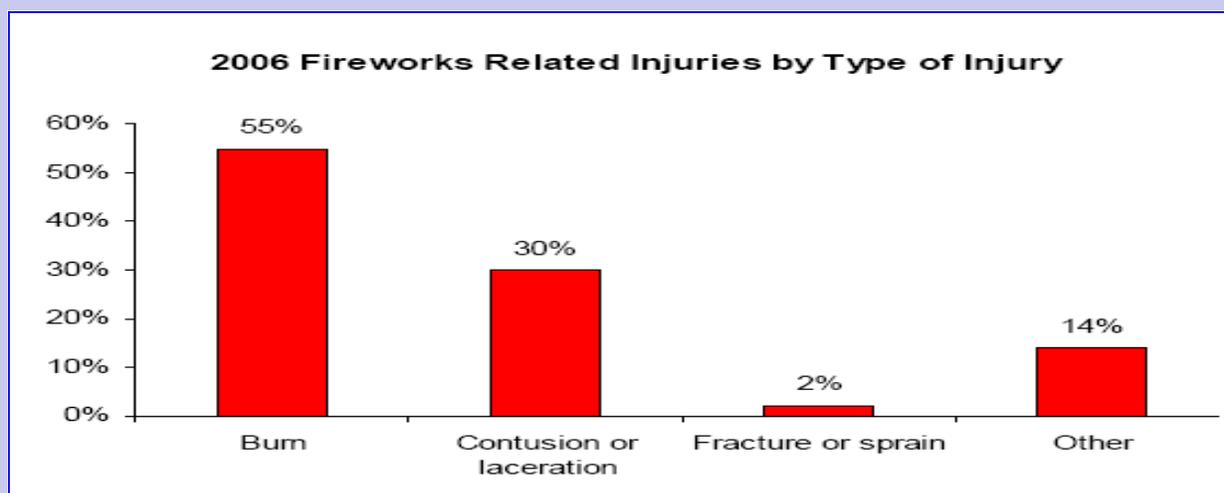
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

"I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL."

Facts and Figures

- In 2005, fireworks caused an estimated 1,800 total structure fires and 700 vehicle fires reported to fire departments. These 2,500 fires resulted in an estimated 60 civilian injuries and \$39 million in direct property damage.
- In 2006, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,200 people for fireworks related injuries. Forty-nine percent of the injuries were to the extremities and forty-six percent were to the head. Fifty-five percent of the 2006 fireworks injuries were burns, while thirty percent were contusions and lacerations.
- The risk of fireworks injury was two-and-a-half times as high for children ages 10-14 as for the general population.
- In 2001-2005, an estimated 1 person per year was killed in reported fires started by fireworks, while 6 people per year were killed directly by fireworks.
- 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.

Five states ban the use of fireworks by consumers (DE, MA, NJ, NY, and RI). The other 45 states and the District of Columbia permit some or all consumer fireworks. [The American Pyrotechnics Association has compiled a helpful map and directory of state-by-state fireworks control laws](#)



Fireworks Safety Test

1. What is the first thing to do before lighting a firework?
2. How do you know if you are buying quality legal fireworks?
3. Where should you light and watch fireworks?
4. It's always good to have ____ handy when having a fireworks display.
5. How many fireworks should you light at a time?
6. If a firework does not work after lighting it, how long should you wait before trying to light it again?
7. Should small children handle and light fireworks?
8. What should you do if a firework fails to work after lighting it?
9. Where should you store fireworks?
10. How should you dispose of a discharged firework?
11. How should you carry fireworks?
12. What part of your body should be over a firework while lighting it?
13. What safety equipment should you wear when lighting a firework?
14. Are illegal explosives like M-80's and Cherry Bombs really dangerous or just more fun?
15. Is it safe to throw or point a firework at another person?
16. How do you find out what fireworks are legal to buy and shoot in your city?
17. Should children and teenagers be allowed to handle and shoot fireworks without a responsible adult close by?
18. How many fireworks should you carry to the lighting area?
19. Is it OK to drink alcohol and light fireworks?

(Answers on page 5)

NFPA Safety Tips for Barbequing

Propane and charcoal BBQ grills must only be used outdoors. If used indoors, or in any enclosed space, such as a tent, they pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to toxic gases and potential asphyxiation.

- Position the grill well away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas and foot traffic.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area: declare a three-foot "safe zone" around the grill.
- Put out several long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames when flipping burgers.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

Charcoal grills

- Purchase the proper starter fluid and store the can out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited, and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.

Propane grills

Check the gas cylinder hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane by releasing bubbles. If you determine your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame:

- Turn off the gas tank and grill.
- If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not attempt to move the grill.
- Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Never store propane gas cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

Slide Show: [Gas grill safety tips before you start grilling](#)

Facts and Figures NFPA's Principal Gases Engineer, Ted Lemoff, Talks About : Grilling Safety

[How a propane gas grill works](#)

[How to handle propane gas safely](#)

[Safety concerns of charcoal grills](#)

[Safety tips when using the grill](#)

[Why newer gas grills are safer](#)

Fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, is a welcome sight at the family cookout. But fire anywhere else can make your summer kick-off barbecue memorable for all the wrong reasons.

- In 2005, gas and charcoal grills caused 3,400 structure fires and 4,900 outdoor fires in or on home properties, resulting in a combined direct property loss of \$137 million.
- Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills; leaks and breaks are the leading cause, accounting for two-fifths (41%) of the gas grill structure and outdoor fires.
- Gas-fueled grills caused an estimated 2,800 home structure fires and 4,400 home outdoor fires in 2005.
- Charcoal grills have a higher risk than gas grills of death due to unvented carbon monoxide; most of these deaths do not involve fire.
- Charcoal-fueled or other solid-fueled grills caused an estimated 600 home structure fires and 500 home outdoor fires in 2005.
- Placing combustibles too close to heat is the leading cause for charcoal grill home fires.
- Over one-third (35%) of all gas grill and charcoal grill home structure fires begin on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.

- Flammable or combustible gas or liquid, including gas fuel, is the leading item first ignited for home gas grill fires. Structural members or framing and exterior wall coverings or finishes, are the leading items first ignited for home structure charcoal grill fires.

Source: NFPA's "Selections From Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment, Grills" report by John R. Hall, Jr., February 2008



Did You Know?

Each July Fourth, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks. Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks, devastating burns, other injuries, fires, and even death. The most common injuries are burns to the eyes, face and hands.

FIREWORK SAFETY TEST: ANSWERS

1. Read the warning or caution label carefully and follow all directions.
2. Always buy from a reliable seller.
3. Always light outdoors away from combustible material, buildings and plants.
4. Water.
5. Light only one firework at a time.
6. Never try to re-light a firework.
7. No.
8. Wait for 15 to 20 minutes and then dump the firework in a bucket of water and let it soak.
9. If at all possible, don't store fireworks. If you have to store them, store them in a cool dry place and keep them out of the reach of children.
10. Soak them in a bucket of water before disposing of them in a trash-can.
11. Carry fireworks in their original bag or box.
12. No part of your body should be over the firework while lighting it.
13. Eye protection should be worn when lighting fireworks.
14. Illegal explosives are very dangerous and should never be used.
15. It is never safe to point or throw fireworks at other people or animals.
16. Ask a reliable seller or your local police or fire department.
17. Close adult supervision is always needed.
18. One. All other fireworks should be kept at a safe distance so they don't accidentally become lighted.
19. No, have a designated lighter.

Critical Days of Summer Fatalities May 08



Safety never takes a holiday.

Author Unknown

