



NEWS RELEASE

Doug Neville, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2011

CONTACT:

Kristine Chapin, 651-201-7567

FIRE MARSHAL: RESPONSIBILITY IS THE KEY TO FIREWORKS SAFETY

Respect for the Law, Respect for Dangers Help Reduce Injury Risks

ST. PAUL — According to statistics collected annually June 25 through July 15 from Minnesota hospitals and fire departments, there is a general trend toward safety with regard to fireworks use in Minnesota. From a high of 111 injuries in 2004, recent years show a decline to 57 fireworks injuries in 2009. Similarly, property damage numbers have dropped from close to \$4,000 to about \$1,500. The goal, says State Fire Marshal Jerry Rosendahl, is zero — and two important behaviors will help move numbers in that direction.

He says Minnesota citizens must keep in mind that if it flies or explodes, it's illegal in this state. Personal fireworks legal for use in Minnesota are sparklers, snakes, glow worms, string poppers, and other non-aerial, non-explosive devices. They may not be used on public property, and purchasers must be 18 years of age. Items such as firecrackers, bottle rockets, roman candles, etc. may not be purchased, sold, possessed, used or transported except by certified fireworks operators.

“The law is clear,” he says. “It doesn’t change because you’re shooting these things over the lake, or because the neighbors don’t mind or the grass is wet. To be truly responsible adults, we must think about what we’re teaching our children when we cherry-pick the laws we’re going to obey.”

In addition, Rosendahl stresses that legal fireworks should be used carefully, with respect for their potential to cause injury. “Sparklers are a lot of fun, but they are also metal wires dipped in explosives. The burning tip of a sparkler can exceed 1800 degrees. That’s why it’s smart to supervise, wear shoes and keep a bucket of water nearby to cool and extinguish the spent wires.”

Other safety tips include:

- Light one item at a time, and never inside an enclosed container
- NEVER attempt to relight a “dud”
- Avoid areas with dry brush, grass or debris; flying sparks easily ignite them

“Everyone wants to see injury numbers continue to drop,” Rosendahl says, “and our paramedics, firefighters and hospitals don’t need the work. So please act responsibly. Leave the aerial explosives to the professionals and enjoy your July 4 holiday safely.”

###

Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

Driver and Vehicle Services

Emergency Communication Networks

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Minnesota State Patrol

Office of Communications

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Pipeline Safety

Office of Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal