

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2008

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Office of the State Fire Commissioner
Commonwealth News Bureau
Room 308, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

CONTACT: Ruth A. Myers (OSFC)
(717) 651-2009

Jack Lewis (PSP)
(717) 783-5556

STATE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS REMIND PENNSYLVANIANS ABOUT FIREWORKS, SAFETY TIPS

HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania State Police and the Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner reminded residents today about the laws governing fireworks usage and safety tips.

“Fireworks can turn a joyful 4th of July celebration into a painful memory, if children and adults use them incorrectly and without regard to the law,” said State Police Commissioner Jeffery B. Miller. “Although legal consumer fireworks that comply with federal regulations can be relatively safe, all fireworks are hazardous and can cause injury.”

Pennsylvania state law specifically permits the use of sparklers, trick noise makers, and other such novelties, and is one of only a handful of states that permits the use of “novelty” fireworks. These fireworks can be sold and used in Pennsylvania.

“The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that approximately 16 percent of all consumer fireworks injuries are caused by sparklers. Hands and legs are burned, and a majority of sparkler injuries happen with children,” said State Fire Commissioner Edward Mann. “In fact, sparkler injuries accounted for one-third of all fireworks injuries suffered by children 5 or younger.”

Mann said these injuries would not have occurred if there had been close adult supervision and basic safety steps. Sparklers may not appear to be dangerous but they can generate temperatures higher than 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit and cause serious injuries.

Mann shared the following safety tips from The National Council on Fireworks Safety:

- Sparklers should ALWAYS be used under close adult supervision.
- Always remain standing while using sparklers.
- Never hold a child in your arms while using sparklers.
- Sparklers and bare feet can be a painful combination. Always wear closed-toe shoes when using sparklers.
- Always stand at least six feet from another person while using sparklers.
- Show children how to hold sparklers away from their body and at arm's length.
- Teach children not to wave sparklers, especially wooden stick sparklers, and not to run while holding burning sparklers.
- Never hand a lighted sparkler to another person.
- Never hold, or light more than one sparkler at a time.
- Sparkler wires and sticks remain hot long after the flame has gone out. Be sure to drop the spent sparkler directly into a bucket of water.

“Sparklers are a traditional way to celebrate the 4th of July. Let’s teach our children how to use them safely and help prevent needless injuries,” said Mann.

“Fireworks, such as illegal firecracker-type devices (M-80’s, silver salutes, quarter sticks) and professional display fireworks should never be used or handled by consumers due to serious injuries and deaths that can and do occur,” said Miller.

Before using fireworks this holiday weekend, it is important that you know the fireworks laws where you live.

For more information on Pennsylvania laws regarding fireworks, visit the “FAQs about Fireworks” at www.psp.state.pa.us.

###