

## A Moment for **Fireworks Safety** from the Safety and Health Council of Western Missouri and Kansas

Summertime means picnics, barbecues, parades and fireworks displays especially around the **4<sup>th</sup> of July**. Summer also means an increase in injuries from backyard grills, bonfires and fireworks. In **2006** an estimated **9,200** people were treated in emergency rooms for fireworks related injuries, **36%** of whom were under 15 years old.

Children between the ages of **10 and 14** were at three times the risk of fireworks injuries than the general public. About a third of the injuries were from small firecrackers, **21%** from bottle rockets and **20%** from sparklers. In 2004, fireworks caused **\$21 Million Dollars** in property damage.

The Safety and Health Council of Western Missouri and Kansas advises that the best way to safely enjoy this **4<sup>th</sup> of July** is to watch a public fireworks display conducted by professionals.

However if fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to use them, be sure to be aware to follow the following safety tips:

- **Never allow children to handle fireworks**
- **Older children should use fireworks only under close supervision**
- **Light Fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from onlookers, houses and flammable materials**
- **Light one device at a time; maintain a safe distance after lighting**
- **Do not allow any running or horseplay while fireworks are being used.**
- **Never ignite devices in a container.**
- **Do not try re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks; douse and soak them with water and discard them safely**
- **Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off in case of fire.**

Burns were the leading type of fireworks injury (**55%**). The hands, head, or eyes are involved in nearly **83%** of all injuries. In **24%** of cases, the eye was involved. One third of all eye injuries result in permanent blindness.

Injuries are most commonly associated with firecrackers 21% , sparklers 20% and roman candles 14%. Sparklers reach temperatures greater than 1200 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause serious burns by igniting clothing.

We hope this information helps you have a safe and healthy **4<sup>th</sup> of July** Holiday!

