



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

June 25, 2008  
For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Stephanie Marquis, (608) 266-1683

## **Safety First on the Fourth**

With the Fourth of July just around the corner, state health officials are encouraging people to enjoy fireworks in a safe and responsible manner.

“Fireworks are fun, but they can be very dangerous if used incorrectly,” said Secretary Karen Timberlake. “Firecrackers, rockets and sparklers cause most fireworks injuries, so we ask that people be extremely careful when using them. The safest way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to trained professionals.”

According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, children are more likely to be injured by fireworks and about half of the victims are under 15 years of age. Sparklers are especially dangerous to very young children, as they cause the most fireworks-related injuries for children under six. If older children are allowed to play with fireworks, they should be closely supervised because children are 11 times more likely to be injured by fireworks when they are unsupervised.

The Commission says that the majority of injuries from fireworks are not caused by large, illegally purchased fireworks. Rather, most injuries occur when someone mishandles small, legal fireworks. Injuries may result from being too close when fireworks explode. Injuries from fireworks most often affect the hands and fingers, eyes, and head and face.

All fireworks should be used with extreme caution. Here are some important safety tips to help keep everyone safe during fireworks displays:

- Always have an adult present, and never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and label instructions.
- Always have water, such as a garden hose and a bucket nearby.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time, and never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.
- Never throw or point fireworks at other people or animals.
- Keep your pets indoors to reduce the risk that they will run loose and get injured. Animals have very sensitive ears and can be stressed or frightened due to the igniting of fireworks.
- Never re-light "dud" fireworks. Instead, wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak the “dud” firework in a bucket of water.
- Dispose of fireworks properly by soaking them in water and then disposing of them in your trashcan.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.

For more information on Fireworks Safety, visit: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Fireworks.htm>

-END -