

Know Your Fireworks!

Consumers Warned of Dangers of Illegal Explosives and Professional Fireworks

Everyone enjoys fireworks, especially in the festive Fourth of July season. But some devices can be dangerous. The National Council on Fireworks Safety recommends that you only buy consumer fireworks from a licensed store, tent or stand. Never buy fireworks from an individual's house or from someone on the street. Such devices are likely to be illegal explosives or professional 1.3G fireworks that can seriously injure you.

Consumer fireworks, regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, are packaged in bright colors and have safety warnings on the package. The packaging sets forth the country of origin, which is normally China. Typical consumer fireworks include fountains, cones, sparklers, firecrackers, rockets and multi-tube products.

Illegal explosive are often unpackaged and wrapped with plain brown paper. They are unlikely to have any safety warnings or place of manufacturer. Many of them are handmade in basements or illicit factories. They go by names such as M-80, Quarter Stick or Cherry Bombs. If someone approaches you to sell one of these illegal explosives, politely decline and then call your local police department.

Professional 1.3G fireworks are legal, but only in the hands of a licensed, trained Pyrotechnician. These devices are very different than consumer fireworks, are extremely powerful and are not meant for consumer use. These fireworks will have a warning statement and place of manufacturer, but will also plainly display that they are 1.3G professional fireworks. If someone approaches you to sell one of these professional fireworks, politely decline and then call your local police department.

Consumer fireworks, when used in accordance with their instructions, are very safe. Injuries from consumer fireworks have shown a dramatic decrease over the last twenty years, despite an astonishing increase in usage by consumers. Some form of consumer fireworks are allowed in 45 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

For a full list of consumer fireworks safety tips and a safety video, please visit www.FireworksSafety.org.

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