

Fireworks are used world wide to provide our holiday celebrations with fascinating colors, sounds, and special effects. Despite their appeal however, fireworks present various safety hazards when they are used carelessly or by untrained persons. When planning your celebrations this year, please use extreme care if you plan to operate fire works.

Fire Facts

- Pyrotechnic devices (better known as fireworks) are designed to burn and explode and can cause serious injuries such as burns, lacerations, amputations, and blindness. Children are particularly susceptible to injury
- A simple "Sparkler" can burn as hot as 1200 degrees Fahrenheit.
- The use of fireworks is governed by regulation.

The Law

- Part 5, Section 5.8 of the Alberta Fire Code, governs fireworks.
- There are two types of fireworks: "low hazard" which are the type you will use and, "high hazard" which are the type only licensed professionals may use.
- You cannot store more than 10 kilograms (gross weight) of low hazard fireworks in a dwelling unit. They must be stored in a secure container and in a cool dry place away from open flame, excessive heat, or spark producing equipment. No person is permitted to store high hazard fireworks in a dwelling unit.
- When you transport fireworks, you must do so in accordance with the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.
- When you discharge the fireworks, you must have a fire extinguisher with a 2-A rating available for immediate use at the discharge area. You must wet down the ground where you will discharge ground level fireworks immediately before the discharge and you must aim projectile fireworks no more than 15 degrees off perpendicular. Before the discharge, you must also have the consent of the property owner or occupant, if it is not you, and any neighbouring property owners where there is a possibility the debris from the discharge could fall on their lands.
- Fireworks cannot be purchased or discharged anywhere in Alberta without a permit. If you are discharging on public lands or within a forest protection area as defined by the Public Lands Act or the Forest and Prairie Protection Act, you must obtain a permit from a Forest Officer. In every other case, you must receive a permit from the municipality before you can use, sell, possess, purchase or discharge any type of fireworks in that municipality.
- Any failure to obtain a permit or to follow the permit conditions could result in the cost of any damage or fire suppression activity being assessed against you.

Last updated/reviewed July 19, 2005

For more information, please contact the Fire Commissioner's Office at (780) 427-8392, or visit www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca.

Dial 310-000 for toll-free access outside of Edmonton

To obtain a permit you should call the Fire Chief of the municipality where you intend to buy or discharge the fireworks. The Fire Chief can advise you whether you need a permit from a Forest Officer once he or she is aware of the location you intend to use for discharge. If the municipality does not have a fireworks permit process or does not otherwise provide permission for discharge, you cannot discharge the fireworks in that municipality.

Safety Tips

- The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend an outdoor public display put on by professionals.
- While attending your municipally sponsored fireworks display, keep your distance. If you're close enough to see what they are doing, you're close enough to be injured if they make a mistake.
- If you decide to buy and use your own fireworks, purchase your fireworks from a reliable source and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Never experiment or make your own fireworks. Stay away from illegal explosives.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies.
- Never allow young children to play with fireworks.

Sparklers

- Use sparklers outdoors under adult supervision — on a driveway, sidewalk, or other fire-resistant surface.
- Do not use them in a high wind.
- Deposit used sparklers immediately into a metal container; otherwise they may be stepped on while hot or lost in the grass only to be found at the next lawn mowing.