

# Facts About Fireworks Injuries



Prevent Blindness America wants all Americans to know the dangers of consumer fireworks. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the following fireworks injury statistics:

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- > Fireworks devices were involved in an estimated 9,600 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2011 (the latest year for which data is available).
- > An estimated 6,200 injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms during the one-month period (June 17-July 17) surrounding the Fourth of July.
- > Eyes were the second most commonly injured part of the body, with an estimated 1,100 fireworks-related eye injuries treated in the same one-month period of 2011.
- > Sparklers accounted for 1,100 injuries, firecrackers (800) and reloadable shells (900).
- > Males accounted for 68% of fireworks injuries.
- > There were 200 eye injuries from viewing public fireworks displays.
- > 26% of fireworks injuries were to children under age 15.
- > Data from the U.S. Eye Injury Registry shows that bystanders are more often injured by fireworks than operators themselves.
- > Contusions, lacerations and foreign bodies were the most common injuries to eyes.
- > There were 4 fireworks-related deaths in 2011.



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## Facts About Fireworks Injuries—Continued

### Keep These Fireworks-Related Injuries in Mind

- > A 16-year-old male's brother stacked multiple-tube devices on top of each other and ignited them. The tubes fell over and started shooting in all directions. A firework exploded and went into his right eye. As a result, the victim suffered a corneal abrasion and hyphema.
- > A 31-year-old male set off aerial shells at a beach. He placed a mortar into a tube and buried the tube a few inches in sand. When he lit the mortar, the tube blew apart and caused the mortar to go sideways. The firework hit the victim in his right eye. The victim suffered bleeding in his right eye, and the iris was torn apart.
- > A 34-year-old male dismantled a cake device (mortar) and one of the tubes went off more quickly than he expected and exploded in his face. As a result, the victim suffered broken bones between his nose and eye socket. The victim now requires prescription glasses for his right eye due to permanent vision loss.
- > A 54-year-old female was in a public park watching a city's fireworks display across a river. The ashes/debris from the fireworks went into her eye. Her eye was irritated, and she got a hematoma in the eye.

### Our Position: Protect Your Sight by Celebrating Safely

Prevent Blindness America urges you to celebrate safely. Fireworks are extremely dangerous. Do not purchase, use or store fireworks of any type. Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks. Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

Call our toll-free hotline at **800.331.2020** to receive Safe Summer Celebrations. The booklet discusses the dangers of fireworks and offers safe alternatives. You can also request a copy of our *Fireworks Eye Injury Safety Quiz*.

Prevent Blindness America supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks, except those used in authorized public displays by licensed operators, as the only effective means of eliminating the social and economic impact of fireworks-related trauma and damage. For more on Prevent Blindness America's position on fireworks, request a copy of our complete position statement.

Source: Tu, Yongling and Granados, Demar V., 2011 Fireworks Annual Report: Fireworks-Related Deaths, Emergency Department-Treated Injuries, and Enforcement Activities During 2011, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, June 2012. (<http://www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/2011fwreport.pdf>)

