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:

> Fireworks devices were involved in an estimated 8,600 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2010 (the latest year for which data is available).

> An estimated 6,300 injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms during the one-month period (June 18-July 18) surrounding the Fourth of July.

> Eyes were the third most commonly injured part of the body, with an estimated 1,300 fireworks-related eye injuries treated in the same one-month period of 2010.

> Sparklers accounted for 1200 injuries, firecrackers (900) and reloadable shells (500).

> Males accounted for 65% of fireworks injuries.

> Of the 1200 estimated sparkler injuries, more than half were to children age 4 and younger.

> 40% 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.

> In 2006, nine out of ten emergency room fireworks injuries involved fireworks that Federal regulations permit consumers to use, according to the National Fire Protection Association. “Safe and sane” fireworks cause more injuries than illegal fireworks, especially to preschool children.

> There were 3 fireworks-related deaths in 2010.
Keep These Fireworks-Related Injuries in Mind

> A 4-year-old boy was leaning over a smoke bomb that his father lit when a small piece of tar shot into his eye. He suffered a corneal abrasion.

> A 6-year-old girl was hit in the eye with a bottle rocket that her neighbor lit. She suffered severe eye trauma and her doctor fears she may later develop glaucoma due to the injury.

> A 12-year-old boy did not fully unwrap the fuse of a fountain-type firework. When he lit the fuse, the firework exploded in his face and caused a hole in his retina.

> Another 12-year-old boy was standing near his friend who lit a bottle rocket in his hand and dropped it to the ground. The rocket ended up hitting the victim in the eye and causing acute vision loss and a large hyphema. The victim was hospitalized and return of his full vision is not certain.

> A 35-year-old male was setting off mortar-type fireworks. When one did not go off, he leaned over it to re-light it and it exploded in his face. The man suffered an impact injury to his eyes and was legally blind for a week.

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.