

Massachusetts Fire Officials urge people to leave the fireworks to the professionals

Children under 15 Account for Over 1/3 of Fireworks Burn Injuries.

“Public fireworks displays are back this year, and fire departments across the state are making sure they are safe for spectators and for shooters,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey. “Illegal fireworks are risky, especially around children who will imitate what they see adults do. Let’s keep our children safe.” Children and teens under 15 account for more than one-third of the severe fireworks burn injuries requiring emergency room visits in Massachusetts.

4th of July No Holiday for Firefighters

Centerville-Osterville-Marston Mills Fire Chief Michael J. Winn, president of the Fire Chiefs’ Association of Massachusetts, said, “The Fourth of July holiday is a busy time for firefighters. We respond to all types of fires and medical emergencies. In fact, the week of July 4 is one of the busiest times of the year for fires. So please leave the fireworks to the professionals and enjoy the many supervised fireworks displays.”



State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, “Remember, fireworks are illegal to transport into Massachusetts, even if they were purchased legally elsewhere. The State Police Bomb squad is coordinating enforcement efforts with local fire and police departments to help avoid a repeat of last year, where citizen complaints about the unsafe use of illegal fireworks increased sharply.”

Fireworks Cause Many Dangerous Fires

There were many fires, amputations and burn injuries from illegal fireworks in Massachusetts last year. Dozens were displaced during the pandemic by fires started by fireworks. In the past decade (2011-2020), there have been 941 major fire and explosion incidents involving illegal fireworks reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). The incidents caused 12 civilian injuries, 42 fire service injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$2.1 million.

- On May 27, 2020, illegal fireworks ignited the exterior stairs of a 2-family home in New Bedford. Damages from this fire were estimated to be \$3,000.
- On June 14, 2020, the Worcester Fire Department responded to a fire in a 3-decker started by illegal fireworks. A firework set off in the street landed on the roof and ignited it.

Eleven people were displaced. Smoke alarms failed to operate and damages were estimated at \$145,739.

- On June 16, 2020, fireworks ignited a fire on the first-floor porch of a 2-family Springfield home. Damages from the fire were estimated at \$10,000.

- On July 16, 2020, the Boston Fire Department responded to a car fire. Someone lit fireworks on top of a Mercedes Benz. Damages were estimated at \$8,000.

- On August 10, 2020, the Orange Fire Department and several surrounding communities responded to a brush fire on Tully Mountain in Orange. It took several days to put the fire out in the rugged terrain and hot and humid weather. Remnants of fireworks and a campfire were found at the seat of the fire.

- On October 10, 2020, someone set off fireworks in the rear hallway of a 6-unit Boston apartment building. Twenty people were displaced and the fire caused \$3,250 in damages.



Burns and Injuries Caused by Fireworks

In the past decade (2011-2020), 32 people were treated at Massachusetts emergency rooms for severe burns injuries from fireworks (burns covering 5% or more of the body) according to the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System (M-BIRS). Fifty-four percent of the victims were people under age 25 who will spend the rest of their lives with these scars.

- On July 18, 2020, a 13-year old boy visiting Randolph, MA suffered burns to 10% of his body surface area from illegal fireworks.
- On July 4, 2019, a 29-year old Charlton man received burns to 9% of his body and puncture wounds to his back from a fireworks explosion. State Police confiscated a large cache of

illegal fireworks from his home.

- On July 5, 2019, a 16-year old male from Dartmouth received 1st- & 2nd-degree burns on the lower portions of his body from a fireworks explosion.

- On July 9, 2019, a 4-year old Boston girl grabbed a burning sparkler that someone else was holding and suffered burns to her left hand.

- On July 7, 2020, fireworks a young boy was holding went off causing severe injuries to his hand. This happened near Carson Beach in South Boston.

- On July 20, 2020, a 43-year old Turners Falls man suffered a serious leg injury from illegal fireworks.

All Fireworks Are Illegal in Massachusetts

The possession and use of all fireworks by private citizens is illegal in Massachusetts. This includes Class C fireworks, which are sometimes falsely called “safe and sane” fireworks. Class C fireworks include sparklers, party poppers, snappers, firecrackers, spinners, cherry bombs and more. Sparklers burn at 1800°F or higher. It is illegal to transport fireworks into Massachusetts, even if they were purchased legally elsewhere. Illegal fireworks must be confiscated on the spot by law enforcement officials.