

Massachusetts Officials: Leave Independence Day fireworks to the professionals

“STOW – Every year in Massachusetts, illegal fireworks cause fires, explosions, property damage, and serious injuries. As we enter the weeks around July 4th, when more than 60% of these incidents occur, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine is reminding residents and visitors to leave fireworks to the professionals.

“Fireworks are inherently dangerous,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “Possessing or using them in Massachusetts requires licensing and certification. They are illegal for personal use here even if purchased legally in another state. These laws work: the rate of fireworks injuries in Massachusetts is about one-fifth the national average.”



Mass.gov photo.

Over the past five years, fireworks have caused 532 fires and explosions, about \$1.5 million in property damage, and more than 200 serious injuries that required treatment in a hospital emergency department.

The following incidents were reported last year alone:

- On May 21, 2023, a Kingston man who was allegedly manufacturing destructive devices for use as homemade fireworks suffered life-altering injuries to his hands, chest, and face. He was MedFlighted to Brigham and Women's Hospital. Additional devices found at the scene were secured and rendered safe by the State Police Bomb Squad.
- On July 3, 2023, commercial-grade fireworks caused a fire on the second-floor porch of a multi-family home in Chelsea. State Police fire investigators assigned to the State Fire Marshal's office and Chelsea officials determined that commercial-grade aerial fireworks being discharged in front of a nearby masonry business struck the rear porch and ignited combustible materials. Additional fireworks were found nearby and seized.
- On July 4, 2023, a West Yarmouth man was badly injured after attempting to discharge illegal fireworks. He was transported first to Cape Cod Hospital and then to Brigham and Women's Hospital with severe injuries to his right hand and thigh.
- On July 5, 2023, a teenage boy lost part of his hand and a teenage girl suffered burn injuries after igniting illegal fireworks in Hyde Park. Both were transported to the hospital for their injuries.
- On July 7, 2023, a residential structure fire in Danvers displaced four residents. State Police and Danvers fire investigators determined that it was caused by the unsafe use of sparklers in the home's basement during an Independence Day party. This was the second year in a row in which sparklers

caused a fire that displaced all residents from a home: in 2022, a similar fire in Dracut went to three alarms.

Massachusetts law requires police to seize any illegal fireworks they encounter in the course of their duties. People who use or possess them illegally are also subject to a fine, while the illegal sale of fireworks is an arrestable offense that carries potential jail time.

“We want everyone to have a safe, happy Fourth of July,” State Fire Marshal Davine said. “Please don’t risk a fire, injury, or a day in court. There are dozens of permitted municipal shows across Massachusetts this season, so leave fireworks to the professionals.”

The Department of Fire Services posts a list of permitted fireworks displays and updates it each week through the summer. To view the list – and to learn more about the dangers of illegal fireworks – visit the DFS website.”