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**St. Tammany
Fire Protection District No. 1
Fire Prevention Bureau**

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Press Release

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Contact: Fire Prevention Chief, Neil Ricca

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Subject: Fireworks Safety

LEAVE THE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS

FIREWORKS are spectacular to watch, but can be extremely dangerous in the hands of amateurs. When celebrating this New Year's Eve, St. Tammany Fire District # 1 Fire Prevention Chief Neil Ricca urges families to attend fireworks displays put on by professionals who follow state fire codes.

NFPA, whose mission is to increase fire safety worldwide, strongly supports local fire department efforts to limit and educate the general public use and handling of fireworks due to the unpredictable nature of such materials.

"Playing with fireworks invites disaster", says Fire Prevention Chief Ricca. "It's just not worth the risk. As parents and adults, we have a responsibility to protect our children. While most parents work year round to keep their children safe, if they shoot fireworks off in their yards once a year, they are placing their children at substantial risk", says Ricca.

Statistics from Louisiana SAFE KIDS and the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) show that fireworks account for more than 5,000 emergency visits for children annually. Children from ages 10 to 14 account for most of these incidents. Injuries usually involve hands, eyes or heads and can lead to amputations, blindness, scarring, or even death.

If you choose to use fireworks, practice extreme caution and remember these safety guidelines recommended by National SAFE KIDS and NFPA and local safety advocates.

- **ONLY ADULTS SHOULD HANDLE FIREWORKS.** Children should leave the area immediately if their friends are using fireworks.
- **DISCUSS SAFETY PROCEDURES WITH YOUR CHILDREN.** Teach children to "stop, drop and roll" if their clothes catch fire and make sure they know how to call 911. Show them how to put out fireworks by using water or a fire extinguisher.
- **READ LABELS CAREFULLY AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.** By law, all fireworks must carry a warning label describing necessary safety precautions.
- **NEVER USE FIREWORKS INDOORS.**

- BE SURE SPECTATORS ARE OUT OF RANGE BEFORE LIGHTING FIREWORKS.
- NEVER AIM OR THROW FIREWORKS AT ANOTHER PERSON.
- NEVER PLACE YOUR FACE OR ANY OTHER BODY PART OVER FIREWORKS.
- NEVER TRY TO REIGNITE FIREWORKS THAT MALFUNCTION.
- NEVER CARRY FIREWORKS IN YOUR POCKET.
- ONLY LIGHT FIREWORKS ON SMOOTH, FLAT SURFACES AWAY FROM HOUSES, DRY LEAVES AND FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.

If you choose to use fireworks, follow local fireworks laws;

- **FIREWORKS SALE AND USAGE IS AND HAS BEEN BANNED INSIDE THE CITY LIMITS OF SLIDELL.**
- **IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH THERE IS CURRENTLY A BAN ON ANY AND ALL PROJECTILE TYPES OF FIREWORKS.**

Ricca offers the following suggestions to safeguard your property from potential firework related damage:

Remove all pine straw and dry leaves from roof tops and rain gutters.

Reduce your potential for exposure by cleaning the areas next to any structures on your property.

Wet down your roof tops and soak dry vegetation.

Walk around and do a visual inspection of your property prior to retiring for the night.

Please check smoke detectors again, to further ensure the safety of your family.

Ricca would like to remind the public that “State law prohibits anyone from offering to sell or selling fireworks to any child under the age of fifteen”.