

ST. TAMMANY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT # 1

Fire Prevention Bureau

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Press Release

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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 the Fourth of July, 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. Attending a public fireworks display on the 4th is a safe way to honor our tradition of independence, our shared values, and our hopes for a healthy future.

“There are really no safe fireworks” said Chief Ricca, “because of the unpredictable nature of fireworks, when things go wrong, the results can be disastrous.”

“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.

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.

---MORE, MORE, MORE---

Ricca offers the following suggestions to safeguard you and 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 garden areas adjacent to structures and soak mulch materials.

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

Please check your smoke alarms again, to further ensure the safety of your family. If your smoke alarms are over 10 years old they should be replaced. Anyone who cannot afford to purchase a new smoke alarm for their residence should contact the Fire Prevention Bureau @ 985-646-4387. We do have a limited supply of grant monies available to purchase replacement alarms for those in need.

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.**
- **STATE LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE FROM OFFERING TO SELL OR SELLING FIREWORKS TO ANY CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF FIFTEEN**

If you choose to use fireworks, practice extreme caution and remember these safety guidelines;

- **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 STRUCTURES, DRY LEAVES AND FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.**

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