



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 29, 2006

American Red Cross Urges Fireworks Safety

The Illinois Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross is urging the public to use caution during the July 4th holiday and encourages individuals and families to take the time to go over safety tips for the use of fireworks.

"Each year, approximately 10,000 people in the United States are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with fireworks," said Chris Shanahan, Director of Community Health & Safety for the Illinois Capital Area Chapter. "More than 50 percent of fireworks-related injuries are burns to the hands, arms, eyes and face, and many of these victims are children."

The Red Cross urges the community to follow the following fireworks safety tips:

- Never allow children to play with fireworks. About half of those injured are under the age of 15.
- Read and follow all fireworks warnings and instructions.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby in case of accident or fire.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface. Fireworks should be lit away from houses, dry leaves and flammable materials.
- Protect your eyes with safety glasses or goggles. Regular prescription glasses, sunglasses or contact lenses provide little or no protection and can actually contribute to an injury.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them in metal or glass containers.
- Do not use bottle rockets. They are the most dangerous type of fireworks by far because they fly erratically, frequently injuring bystanders.

In addition, the Red Cross advises the public to always buy fireworks from vendors who operate openly and welcome visits by local police and fire departments. Never buy fireworks from unregulated vendors who are operating in a concealed or secretive fashion.

For more information about fireworks safety, please call the American Red Cross at (217) 787-7602.

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