



## Marion County Board of County Commissioners Marion County Fire Rescue

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[www.marioncountvfl.org/firerescue.htm](http://www.marioncountvfl.org/firerescue.htm)



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### **AVOID STARTING THE SUMMER WITH A BOOM**

Immediate Release

**MARION COUNTY, Fla.** (June 25, 2009) –As you walk outside, you see the night sky lit by a brilliant array of colors and you hear the screeches, bangs and booms of fireworks from all around. You don't, however, stop to think of the danger associated with these fun July 4 icons.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2007, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,800 people for fireworks related injuries; 56 percent of these injuries were to the extremities and 36 percent were to the head. The risk of fireworks injury was two and a half times as high for children ages five to 14, than it was for the general population.

Celebrate safely this Independence Day. Protect yourself and your family.

Illegal fireworks are frequently found to be the cause of brush and grass fires in Marion County. Anything that leaves the ground, explodes or shoots projectiles are illegal in Florida. Novelties, sparklers and trick noisemakers are legal, however, and include snake worms, smoke devices, party poppers and snappers among others.

Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) firefighters encourage citizens to attend public fireworks displays organized by professionals this Fourth of July instead of setting off fireworks at home. If citizens choose to stay at home, however, firefighters say they should follow these safety tips:

- Do not purchase or ignite illegal fireworks.
- Buy novelties from reliable, licensed sellers with a proven reputation.
- Read and follow label directions, and use novelties only for their intended purposes.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or water hose handy just in case an emergency arises.
- Light one novelty at a time.
- Never throw or point novelties at other people.
- Appoint a designated "shooter," never mix alcohol and novelties.
- Never light novelties indoors or in metal or glass containers.
- Wear eye protection and gloves when igniting novelties.
- Ignite sparklers and other legal novelties outdoors on a flat, hard surface in an open area away from grass and other combustibles.
- Never allow children to use sparklers without adult supervision.
- Do not run while using sparklers.
- Soak used novelties in water for at least 15 minutes before throwing them away.
- Never experiment with or make homemade fireworks.
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if someone gets hurt or burned or if a fire erupts.
- Remember, if illegal fireworks are the cause of a fire, a criminal charge may result.

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