



**pennsylvania**  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



**MONTHLY**  
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## FIREWORKS SAFETY

Fireworks are synonymous with our celebration of Independence Day. Yet, the thrill of fireworks can also bring pain. 230 people on average go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the month around the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

In 2014, the Consumer Products Safety Commission conducted a study of fireworks injuries from June 20 through July 20. The study showed that 230 people on average go to the emergency room every day with fireworks-related injuries in the month around the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. 67 percent of these fireworks injuries in 2014 occurred during the month surrounding July 4<sup>th</sup>. Nine people died due to eight fireworks-related incidents. In at least two incidents, the victims were not the users

According to Prevent Blindness ([www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)):



- Firework devices were involved in an estimated 10,500 injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms in 2014 (the latest year for which data is available).
- An estimated 7,000 injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms during the one-month period (June 20–July 20) surrounding the Fourth of July.
- 19 percent, or 1,200, of those injuries were to the eyes.
- Sparklers accounted for 1,400 injuries, while firecrackers accounted for 1,400 and bottle rockets injured 100.
- Males accounted for 74 percent of fireworks injuries.
- 40% of fireworks injuries were to children under age 15.
- For children under 5 years old, sparklers accounted for the most estimated injuries.
- Data from the U.S. Eye Injury Registry (<http://www.useir.org>) shows that bystanders are more often injured by fireworks than operators themselves.
- Contusions, lacerations, and foreign bodies were the most common injuries to eyes.

Additionally, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)), fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires per year, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires, and 16,900 outside and other fires. These fires caused an average of three deaths, 40 civilian injuries, and an average of \$43 million in direct property damage.



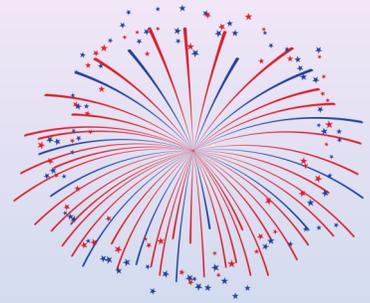
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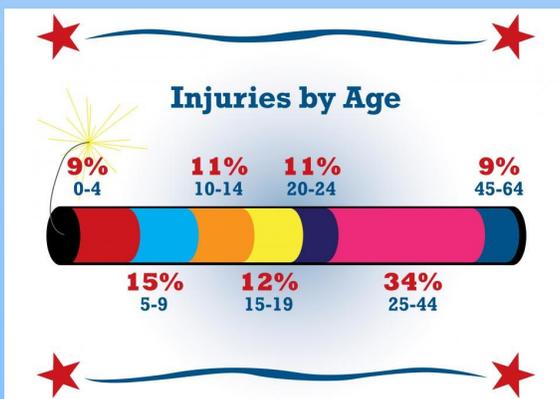
## FIRWORKS SAFETY TIPS

- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
- Know your fireworks; read the cautionary labels and performance descriptions before igniting.
- A responsible adult should supervise all firework activities. Never give fireworks to children.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Save your alcohol for after the show.
- Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
- Light one firework at a time and then quickly move away.
- Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from buildings and vehicles.
- Never relight a “dud” firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
- Always have a bucket of water, a water hose or fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket or shoot them into metal or glass containers.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and place in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations prohibit the possession and transportation of fireworks in your checked baggage or carry-on luggage.
- Report illegal explosives, like M-80s and quarter sticks, to the fire or police department.



### And let's not forget the safety of our pets!

- Don't bring your pets to a fireworks display.
- If fireworks are being used near your home, put your pet in a safe interior room to avoid exposure to the sound.
- Make sure your pet has an identification tag in case it runs off during a fireworks display.
- Never shoot fireworks of any kind (consumer fireworks, sparklers, fountains, etc.) near pets.



## FIREWORKS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Can I use fireworks in Pennsylvania?** State law prohibits the use of Consumer and Display Fireworks in Pennsylvania without a permit. Items defined as “ground and hand-held sparkling devices”, “novelties” and “toy caps” are not currently regulated by State Law; therefore, their sale and use are permissible. These “non-fireworks” are the only types allowed to be sold from tents, stands, convenience stores, retail establishments, and other various outlets not licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

**Can I buy regular fireworks (not sparklers or novelty items) under any conditions?** This answer depends on whether or not you are a Pennsylvania Resident.

- **Pennsylvania residents:** May purchase Consumer Fireworks only with a display permit issued by a municipality.
- **Non-residents:** An amendment to the Fireworks Law, effective November 30, 2004, makes it legal, upon proof of out-of-state residency status, to purchase Consumer Fireworks from a facility licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture provided the Consumer Fireworks are transported directly out of state by the seller or purchaser.

**How do I get a permit for a fireworks display?** The Commonwealth does not issue permits for firework displays and does not oversee the issuance of permits by the municipalities. Contact your local municipality for further information.

Any business entity that performs, provides, or supervises fireworks displays or exhibitions, for profit, must register annually with the Office of Attorney General. For more information, contact the Office of Attorney General, Criminal Law Division, at (717) 787-3391.

**Who enforces the Fireworks Law?** Any Law Enforcement Officer, having jurisdiction, may make an arrest and confiscate fireworks under the Fireworks Law. To report a violation of the Fireworks Law, contact the Police Department servicing your area.

**What else should I know about fireworks?** Cherry bombs, M-80s, M-100s, silver salutes and other illegal fireworks are all extremely dangerous. In addition, fireworks constructed from mail order kits are illegal and dangerous to assemble or use. Never attempt to make your own fireworks or tamper with fireworks.

### For further information:

[Pennsylvania Fireworks Law](http://www.psp.pa.gov/public-safety/Documents/Title_35_Chapter_13A_Fireworks_and_Explosives.pdf) ([http://www.psp.pa.gov/public-safety/Documents/Title\\_35\\_Chapter\\_13A\\_Fireworks\\_and\\_Explosives.pdf](http://www.psp.pa.gov/public-safety/Documents/Title_35_Chapter_13A_Fireworks_and_Explosives.pdf))

U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms – [Federal Explosive and Firework regulations](https://www.atf.gov/explosives/fireworks-safety-and-security) (<https://www.atf.gov/explosives/fireworks-safety-and-security>)

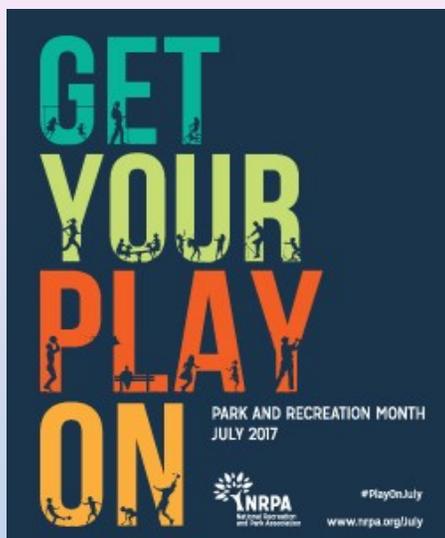
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture – [Regulations and Licensing of Consumer Fireworks Retail Facilities](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/RideMeasurement/Pages/Consumer-Fireworks-.aspx) (<http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/RideMeasurement/Pages/Consumer-Fireworks-.aspx>)



**pennsylvania**  
STATE POLICE



## JULY IS NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH



This July, discover the power of play and adventure. For children and adults, play is a vital part of our mental wellbeing, physical health and personal interactions. During Parks and Recreation Month, the National Recreation and Parks Association ([www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)) is challenging everyone to get their play on with their local parks and recreation. Whether it's summer camp, an adult sports league, exploring a trail, Zumba class, meeting friends on the playground, playing cards in the park, or discovering nature, parks and play go hand in hand.

**Always know the forecast before you plan a trip to the park**

**A portable weather radio can alert you of severe weather while enjoying the outdoors**

National Parks and Recreation Month is a time to promote the benefits of healthy, vibrant communities. It is a time to recognize the importance of parks and recreation in establishing and maintaining quality of life and in contributing to the physical, economic, and environmental well-being of communities.

### What is National Parks and Recreation Month?

Americans have celebrated National Parks and Recreation Month during July since 1985. During National Parks and Recreation Month, individuals and organizations can promote the benefits of local parks and recreation centers to communities and encourage people to get outside, explore local parks, and enjoy outdoor activities.

### Why celebrate parks?

To find connections across communities: Considering access to parks is equally important as ensuring the presence of parks and access has the power to connect communities. The concept of Safe Routes to Parks considers the infrastructure required for a safe, connected system between parks, their access points, and surrounding infrastructure.

To support the environment: Parks play an important role in environmental health by cleaning water, preserving wildlife, and offering a refuge to humans and animals throughout the seasons.

To explore local ecosystems: Parks offer a lot more than meets the eye. Did you know that parks are not just plots of grass? Sports fields, beaches, trails, and many other spaces can be parks offering a host of recreation opportunities.

### **Be Prepared for Severe Storms**

- Storms can bring several hazards to the outdoor adventurer.
- Lightning strikes are highly unpredictable and can cause injury or death
- Strong winds and tornadoes can down trees on campers and hikers

### Why get active outside?

To increase children's chances of success in school: Kids with access to safe parks and playgrounds are more likely to engage in physical activities — and kids who are physically active do better in school.

**Sunscreen and water are essentials when spending time in a park during hot weather**

To contribute to the maintenance of a healthy weight: Local parks and recreation departments increase access to nutritious food options and promote physical activity.

To have a more positive outlook: Spending time outdoors reduces stress and improves mental health. Exposure to nature improves creativity, decreases stress hormones, and calms aggression.

### Pennsylvania State Parks

If you want to explore Pennsylvania's great outdoors, Pennsylvania manages 200,000 acres of park land for hiking, picnicking, camping, fishing, hunting, boating, wildlife watching, and so much more. Pennsylvania State Parks do not charge an entrance fee.



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

To make park reservations, call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday to Saturday, or register online at <https://pennsylvaniastateparks.reserveamerica.com/welcome.do>. If you would like an information packet, you can email your postal address to [parkinfo@state.pa.us](mailto:parkinfo@state.pa.us).

## HAZARDOUS PLANTS

The Commonwealth proudly owns over 2.2 million acres of forests, and approximately 283,000 acres dedicated to state parks with over 1,000 acres of state park trails, all of which have the potential hazard of exposure to poisonous plants. The following will keep you safe whether you are working outdoors or enjoying nature's beauty:



### Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, and Poison Sumac

Remember the phrase "leaves of three, let it be." If you see a plant with groups of three leaflets, do not touch or go near it. This plant produces a reaction after contact with the sap. If you come in contact, wash the area immediately. Seek professional medical help if symptoms persist, treat with over the counter medications.



### Nettles

There are two types of nettles found in Pennsylvania, the stinging nettle and the woodland nettle. Nettles are most easily identified by their rigid hairs on the stems and leaves. Nettles produce a reaction when the hairs become stuck in the skin and inject a mixture of chemicals into the body. Prevent contact by wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants, and avoiding plants with hairy stems. If you come in contact, avoid scratching the area and use over the counter creams to manage symptoms.



### Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is an invasive species and can reach a full-grown height of 8 to 14 feet with a large, umbrella like white flower on the top which can span up to three feet across. The sap from the giant hogweed on the skin can cause a rash or blister and exposure to sunlight can strengthen these effects. Prevent contact by wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants, gloves, and eye protection. If you come in contact, change clothes, shelter the area from sun exposure, wash exposed skin, and seek medical treatment for symptoms.

### Let's not forget pollen allergies caused by plants.

Although pollen is not considered hazardous, it can make life miserable. While June is a key grass pollen month in many areas, it's likely that grass pollen start to trigger in the spring. As the days get longer and the temperature gets higher, you'll probably want to spend more time outdoors. If you suffer from spring allergies, you may have good days and bad days — the temperature, the rainfall amount, and even the time of day will affect grass pollen levels, and you'll need to adjust accordingly. The good news is that by July, grass pollen should subside and you might feel like your spring allergies are finally becoming manageable again. The bad news is that July marks the start of fungus spores and seeds, so if you're allergic to molds and spores, you may feel like your allergies never end. Mold can grow on fallen leaves, compost piles, grasses, and grains.

## PEMA is Social!

*Find us, visit us, like us, tweet us, retweet us!*



Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ReadyPA>

<https://twitter.com/PEMADirector>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA>

## PEMA Can Also be Found on the Web!

*Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved!*



[www.ReadyPA.org](http://www.ReadyPA.org)



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[www.pema.pa.gov](http://www.pema.pa.gov)

Preparedness Events in July

**National Parks and Recreation Month**  
<http://www.nrpa.org/july>

**Fireworks Safety Month**: June 1<sup>st</sup> through July 4<sup>th</sup>  
(<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/news-and-resources-fireworks-safety.aspx>)

### Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: [www.pema.pa.gov](http://www.pema.pa.gov)

ReadyPA: [www.ReadypPA.org](http://www.ReadypPA.org)

SERVPA: [www.Serv.PA.gov](http://www.Serv.PA.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

National Weather Service: [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

PA State Animal Response Team: [www.pasart.us](http://www.pasart.us)

PA511Connect: [www.511pa.com](http://www.511pa.com)

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: <http://www.dcnr.pa.gov>

National Fire Protection Association : [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: [www.agriculture.pa.gov](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov)

Pennsylvania State Police: [www.psp.pa.gov](http://www.psp.pa.gov)

According to the National Weather Service, lightning is one of the top three storm-related killers in the United States. In Pennsylvania, there have been eight deaths from lightning since 2007, all occurring outdoors.

### What should you Be Ready for?

#### Health Hazard

- Electrocutation or shock

#### Utility Outages

- Loss of electricity, cable, internet
- Surge causing damage to electronics

Lightning is **hotter** than the surface of the Sun and can reach temperatures around

**50,000°F**

When Thunder Roars Go Indoors  
weather.gov/lightning



### Know The Facts

**MYTH:** Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

**FACT:** Lightning can strike the same location many times.

**MYTH:** A car is safe because of the tires.

**FACT:** Cars are safe because the electricity travels around the frame *through* the tires into the ground.

**MYTH:** I can't touch someone struck by lightning because I will be shocked.

**FACT:** A lightning strike victim carries no electric charge. Call 911, and begin CPR, if trained. Try to move the victim to a safe place.

### How can you Be Ready?



#### Before

- Pay attention to the forecast, especially if you have outdoor plans
- Postpone activities, if storms are in the forecast



#### During

- "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!"
- "When You See a Flash, Dash to Safety" (Phrase for deaf and hard of hearing)
- Avoid anything with a wire, such as phones, computers, and lights.
- Wait at least 30 minutes, after the last rumble of thunder, to go outdoors.
- Stay away from water, wet items, such as ropes, and metal objects, such as fences and poles. Water and metal do not attract lightning but they are excellent conductors of electricity.