



**Fire Fact Sheet**

**Fireworks Safety**

**All fireworks (not including sparklers and other novelty smoke devices) are illegal in Vermont except for permitted, supervised public fireworks displays.**



Fireworks have become a traditional part of an American family's Fourth of July celebration. Unfortunately, these celebrations all too often result in serious burns, hearing loss and other injuries.

A permit for a display must be obtained from the chief of the local fire department after it is determined by the fire and police chief that the fireworks display will be handled by a competent operator in a manner that will not be hazardous to people or property.

It is also illegal to transport fireworks into Vermont, even if they were purchased legally elsewhere. In addition to the permit from the fire chief there is now an additional federal permit requirement for a public fireworks display. Effective May 24, 2003, a permit is required from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) to purchase or receive display fireworks or large fireworks devices intended for use in fireworks show. A municipality is exempt from the requirement to have an ATF permit to contract, purchase or receive display fireworks.

The purchase or receipt of consumer fireworks or small fireworks devices, that are part of a public fireworks display, does not require an ATF permit, but a permit from the fire chief is still required.

**Fireworks are dangerous and unpredictable, especially in the hands of amateurs. Public fireworks displays conducted by trained professionals and supervised by local fire departments are a good alternative to personal fireworks use. These displays are the smartest and safest way to enjoy fireworks.**

Application for a permit must be made at least 15 days in advance of the fireworks display. Information on the definitions, prohibitions, permits, seizure and penalties in Vermont law regarding sparklers and fireworks are located in 20 V.S.A. [3131](#), [3132](#) and [3135](#). It is unlawful to sell sparklers or smoke devices to minors or to offer for sale or sell sparklers that are not in compliance with the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regulations.

**Under Vermont law illegal fireworks can be confiscated on the spot by officials and you may also be subject to fines up to \$100.00 for each violation or imprisoned for not more than 30 days**



Fireworks can result in severe burns or disfigurement that can last a lifetime. Injuries usually involve the hands/fingers, eyes or head and can sometimes result in amputations, blinding or even death.

It's also important to remember that you can be held civilly liable for damages resulting from improper use of any fireworks. The seconds of pleasure that fireworks may bring are not worth the risk of starting an uncontrolled fire, injury, or death.

Additional information on sparklers, illegal fireworks, or other educational safety material on back

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This sheet is designed to promote fire prevention, code compliance and to enhance the public safety of all Vermonters. This sheet provides a detailed overview of one common issue and is not an all-inclusive list of state laws or additional code requirements that may apply, this sheet does not carry the force of legal opinion. For additional information or details you should contact an Asst. State Fire Marshal in your regional office of the Division of Fire Safety.

Division of Fire Safety Regional Offices

Barre 802-479-4434 \* Rutland 802-786-5867 \* Springfield 802-885-8883 \* Williston 802-879-2300

## Sparklers and other smoke devices are legal for sale & use in Vermont.

Sparklers less than 14 inches long with no more than 20 grams of pyrotechnic mixture and novelty devices limited to snakes, party poppers, glow worms, smoke devices, string poppers, snappers, or drop pops with no more than 0.25 grains of explosive mixture, that are in compliance with United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regulations, are legal for sale and use in Vermont.

However many parents and caregivers overestimate their children's ability to handle sparklers and fireworks, creating a dangerous environment for everyone involved. Even seemingly harmless sparklers and smoke devices can be harmful if not used properly, not only do sparklers burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit but they also encourage the use of matches and lighters by young children. It is unlawful to sell sparklers or smoke devices to minors or to offer for sale or sell sparklers that are not in compliance with the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regulations.

To help ensure that everyone enjoys a safe summer, the Vermont Division of Fire Safety, the National Council on Fireworks Safety and your local fire department offer the following safety tips when using sparklers.

- ◆ Obey the local laws and use common sense.
- ◆ Always read and follow instructions. Always have an adult present.
- ◆ Keep burning sparklers away from clothing and flammable objects.
- ◆ Only use sparklers outdoors, away from buildings and vehicles.
- ◆ Light only one sparkler at a time.
- ◆ Alcohol, fireworks and sparklers do not mix. Be responsible.
- ◆ Do not point or throw sparklers at another person
- ◆ Children under the age of 12 should not handle sparklers.
- ◆ When finished, place used sparklers in a bucket of water.



Despite efforts to educate people about the hazards of fireworks, problems with personal use still continue. Some people, still conduct backyard fireworks displays despite laws against their use and the great danger to themselves and others.

**Illegal fireworks include "bottle rockets," Roman candles, rockets with sticks, mines and shells, helicopter-type rockets, missile-type rockets, revolving wheels, fountains and firecrackers.**



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Individuals concerned about neighbors using fireworks are reminded that Fourth of July festivities result in increased activity for all public safety agencies, i.e., crowd control, fires, traffic issues, etc. Because resources are limited, priority must be given to truly hazardous situations. Individuals with a fire or medical emergency should call 9-1-1; other situations should be reported via the non-emergency number. Situations without a specific address or threat to life or property will be responded to as resources allow.

All of us in Vermont's emergency services want you to keep your Fourth of July festivities enjoyable and safe. Leave the shows to the pros, and don't let dangerous sparks stand between your family and a wonderful Fourth of July celebration.

For additional information about fire safety contact your local fire department  
or visit [WWW.VTFIRESAFETY.ORG](http://WWW.VTFIRESAFETY.ORG)