



# NEWS

## R E L E A S E

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### HUDGENS: USE CAUTION AROUND FIREWORKS

Atlanta – While sparklers and similar non-explosive fireworks are legal in Georgia, Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph T. Hudgens is urging citizens to use caution to avoid injuries and fires when using fireworks during the Fourth of July holiday.

“Fireworks should only be used with close adult supervision,” Hudgens said. “Sparklers can burn at temperatures as high as 1800 degrees and must be used properly.”

The Commissioner said with cities and counties cutting back because of the recession, there may be fewer public displays to attend this year.

“I hope Georgians aren’t tempted to bring illegal fireworks into the state to stage their own displays,” Hudgens said. “Besides being illegal, such activity can lead to serious injury.”

“According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2009, fireworks caused an estimated 18,000 reported fires, including 1,300 structure fires, 400 vehicle fires, and 16,300 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in an estimated 30 civilian injuries and \$38 Million in direct property damage,” Hudgens said. “On Independence Day in a typical year there are more fires reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for half of those fires.”

The law states that the definition of prohibited fireworks shall *not* include: “Wire or wood sparklers of 100 grams or less of mixture per item; other sparkling items which are non-explosive and nonaerial and contain 75 grams or less of chemical compound per tube or a total of 200 grams or less for multiple tubes; snake and glow worms; trick noise makers which include paper streamers, party poppers, string poppers, snappers, and drop pops each consisting of 0.25 grams or less of explosive mixture.”

The sale and use of most types of fireworks, including firecrackers, skyrocket, and cherry bombs, is still illegal in Georgia and punishable by a maximum fine of up to \$1,000 and up to one year in jail.

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## **LEGAL FIREWORKS**

### **ADULT SUPERVISION**

Even legal fireworks should only be used with close adult supervision. In Georgia, no one younger than 18 years of age can purchase sparklers. Adults should always be present when lighting or handling fireworks. Never allow young children to light or handle them. Sparklers can burn at temperatures as high as 1800 degrees.

### **DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Several areas within our state are experiencing extreme drought conditions. Please use caution during the use of the legal fireworks, and make sure each device has been completely extinguished after use.

### **USE ONLY LEGAL PRODUCTS**

Use only legal products. The law states that the definition of prohibited fireworks shall *not* include: “Wire or wood sparklers of 100 grams or less of mixture per item; other sparkling items which are non-explosive and non-aerial and contain 75 grams or less of chemical compound per tube or a total of 200 grams or less for multiple tubes; snake and glow worms; trick noise makers which include paper streamers, party poppers, string poppers, snappers, and drop pops each consisting of 0.25 grains or less of explosive mixture.”

### **LOOK FOR LABELS AND READ THE INSTRUCTIONS**

The law requires instructions and warnings labels. Check the credibility of the distributor to make sure their sparklers are reliable, legal and that they come from a licensed source.

### **TAKE PRECAUTIONS**

Always keep a hose and a bucket of water nearby in case of emergencies.

### **OUTDOORS ONLY**

Use sparklers outdoors, only in clear areas, away from houses, buildings, and dry grass. Be sure to use them only on flat hard surfaces.

### **LET SLEEPING SPARKLERS LIE**

Do not try to relight sparklers that do not ignite. Wait 15 to 20 minutes, then douse and soak them with water and throw them away.

### **PROTECT YOUR PETS.**

The sound of sparklers often frightens animals. To protect your best friends, keep them indoors — away from the loud noise — and secure.