



# NEWS

## R E L E A S E

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### **OXENDINE: USE CAUTION AROUND FIREWORKS; EVEN SPARKLERS CAN BE DANGEROUS**

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

“Fireworks should only be used with close adult supervision,” Oxendine 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,” Oxendine said. “Besides being illegal, such activity can lead to serious injury.”

“According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2008, fireworks caused an estimated 22,500 reported fires, including 1,400 structure fires, 500 vehicle fires, and 20,600 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in an estimated 40 civilian injuries and \$42 million in direct property damage,” Oxendine 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 grains 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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