

## Join Safe Kids Columbus in Celebrating Safety This Fourth of July

### Fireworks Injure 2,600 Kids Each Summer

**Columbus, GA** – The Fourth of July is a time for celebration across the country, and here in Columbus - fireworks are a crowd favorite each year. Whether at a professional show or in the backyard, fireworks can be fun to watch – but they can also be very dangerous.

In 2007, an estimated 2,600 children ages 14 and under were treated in U.S. emergency rooms for injuries involving fireworks during the fireworks season, which runs from the middle of June until the middle of July. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 40 percent of the people injured by fireworks were under the age of 15.

“Don’t ever let kids play with fireworks, period,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator. “They’re intended for use by adults in open spaces and children should watch from a safe distance with plenty of adult supervision to make sure they don’t get too close.”

As with any activity involving hazardous equipment, keep all children under active supervision at all times and give them your undivided attention. “The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to watch them at a community event where professionals handle them,” says Hubbard.

Safe Kids Columbus recommends these precautions for adults using fireworks:

- Light fireworks only on smooth, flat surfaces, and aim them away from spectators, buildings, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Do not try to relight fireworks that malfunction.
- Do not carry fireworks in your pocket or hold them close to your face.
- Visit [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) to make sure the pyrotechnic devices you are using are not subject to any safety recalls.
- Do not modify fireworks or use homemade fireworks.
- Keep a phone handy, and know first aid for burns. Also, keep a fire extinguisher handy and know how to use it.

Fireworks, including sparklers and flares, can cause serious burns as well as blast injuries that can permanently impair vision and hearing. “Teach your children how to call 911 in an emergency. Also teach them what to do if their clothing catches on fire - ‘stop, drop and roll,’” adds Christy Hubbard.

Many pyrotechnic devices are illegal in Georgia. Where permitted by law, fireworks should be handled and used in strict accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and all warning labels.

For more information about fireworks safety and burn prevention, contact (706) 321-6183 or visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org).

*For more information about your local coalition activities, visit [www.safekidscolumbusga.com](http://www.safekidscolumbusga.com). Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.*

