

Florida ophthalmologists encourage firework safety measures in advance of Independence Day

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Severe injuries related to fireworks are becoming more common every year with people suffering serious eye injuries from personal fireworks displays. Most of the victims are children and bystanders located nowhere near the pyrotechnics. As Independence Day nears, the Florida Society of Ophthalmology (FSO) is increasing awareness of potential eye injuries resulting from fireworks and encouraging Floridians to take safety measures to protect their eyes.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported an estimated 14,700 fireworks-related injuries and 11 fatalities in their most recent annual data release (2024). This represents a sharp 52 percent increase in injuries and a 38 percent rise in deaths compared to the previous year. Children under 15 years old made up more than one-third of the victims. Eyes were among the most common body parts injured representing 14 percent of fireworks-related injuries.

"Many people assume that consumer fireworks, often available in your local grocery store, are harmless. However, there is no such thing as safe fireworks. Exploding fireworks can cause blinding eye injuries. These can rupture the eye open, cause retinal detachment, or other injuries like corneal burns," said Ahad Mahootchi, MD, President of the FSO. "Here in Florida, consumer fireworks are legally available for purchase on designated days, including Independence Day. If you have plans to use them, be sure to wear proper eye protection."

Prevention is one of the best ways to protect eyes from fireworks. Here are some tips for keeping eyes safe this Independence Day:

- Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Consider attending a professional fireworks display over creating a personal show.
- Wear eye protection, such as safety goggles.
- The majority of firework-related eye injuries happen to bystanders. Watch fireworks from at least 500 feet away.
- Don't let children, particularly young children, play with sparklers. Sparklers burn at more than 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Provide children with safe alternatives to fireworks, such as LED fiber optic wands and glow sticks.

If an eye injury does occur, call 911 or seek immediate medical care. In the meantime, follow

these guidelines:

- Do not rub eyes.
- Do not rinse eyes.
- Do not apply pressure.
- Do not remove any objects that are stuck in the eye.
- Do not apply ointments or take any blood-thinning pain medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen unless directed by a doctor.

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