

Family Fireworks Safety

We sometimes forget that family fireworks are not toys. Family fireworks are, in fact, powerful pyrotechnic articles and, for this reason, both the sale and purchase of them are restricted. The Explosives Regulatory Division of Natural Resources Canada tests fireworks and approves those that are safe to transport, store, handle, and use.

To ensure a fun but safe family fireworks display, it is important that you follow the simple safety procedures outlined below.

Purchasing and Storing

1. Follow the Laws

Follow your local and provincial/territorial laws regarding the purchase, possession and use of family fireworks; some municipalities restrict sale to certain times of the year while others prohibit the use of family fireworks altogether or do not allow the sale of certain types of family fireworks.

2. Only Purchase Authorized Fireworks From Reliable Dealers

You must be 18 years of age to purchase fireworks.
All authorized fireworks will have a bilingual label.
Do not be tempted to try to smuggle fireworks into Canada from another country (e.g., the United States). In addition to this practice being illegal and subject to heavy fines, fireworks that are not authorized in Canada may be very violent or of dubious quality and thus constitute a safety hazard to you and your children.
Making your own fireworks is prohibited.

3. Store Fireworks Properly

Always store fireworks in a, cool, dry place and keep them away from children.
Check instructions for special handling directions.
The maximum amount of fireworks that can be stored in a dwelling is 10 kg gross weight. Any amount in excess of this must be stored in a separate, locked building.

Transportation

4. Do Not Transport Fireworks in the Passenger Compartment of a Vehicle

Always put them in the trunk. In the absence of a trunk (e.g., van or pick-up truck), transport fireworks in a non-sparking container with a lid. Do not smoke while loading, transporting or unloading fireworks.

Set-Up

5. Use Fireworks Outdoors

Never use fireworks indoors; they are designed for outdoor use only.

6. Choose a Clear, Open Area

Always use fireworks in an open area away from buildings, vehicles, overhead obstructions, and dry brush/grass (which could catch fire).

A minimum clear area of 30 m by 30 m for aerial family fireworks, such as Roman candles, and 20 m by 20 m for fountains and other ground-based items is recommended.

7. Check For Wind

Check wind direction and wind speed; fireworks should be lit with the prevailing wind blowing away from spectators. Don't set off aerial fireworks in strong winds.

8. Have Water Nearby

Keep a charged hose or bucket of water close by in case of a malfunction or fire.

9. Read All Instructions

Carefully read all the instructions for each firework item ahead of time.

10. Use Ground-Based Fireworks on a Hard Surface

Always light ground-based fireworks (fountains, mines) on a hard, flat and level surface to ensure stability of the item. Grass is typically not suitable; lay down wood/plywood.

11. Bury Aerial Fireworks

For aerial fireworks (Roman candles), bury (do not pile) the device to half its length in the ground or in a large pail or box filled with earth or sand.

12. Keep Spectators Safe

Keep all spectators at least 20 m away.

Firing

13. Use Proper Eye Protection and Wear Proper Clothing

Protect your eyes with safety glasses or safety goggles. Regular prescription glasses or sunglasses provide little or no protection and may actually contribute to an injury.

Wear non-flammable clothing such as cotton; never wear synthetic fibres (nylon, polyester) when firing.

14. Keep Children Away From Fireworks

Never let children handle, play with or fire fireworks under any circumstances. Even sparklers, which are considered by many as “safe” fireworks for children, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing.

15. Use Care When Handling Fireworks

Take care when handling fireworks to prevent dropping them. Do not carry fireworks in your pockets. Never smoke while handling fireworks.

16. Use Care When Firing Fireworks

When lighting, never put any part of your body or head over the firework; never hand hold them or insert them into other means of containment such as pipes; and never point or throw them at people.

During the show, store the unused fireworks away from the firing area and keep them covered to prevent stray sparks from prematurely setting them off.

17. Duds or Misfires

Never attempt to re-light fireworks that have misfired (duds). Wait 30 minutes and then place them in a bucket of water.

18. Clean-Up After the Show

Wait 30 minutes after the display has finished. Check the firing area for duds, clean up all debris, and check it again the next morning.