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Fireworks Eye Safety

Virginia Society of Eye Physicians & Surgeons suggests that you attend a public fireworks display as a safe, patriotic way to honor tradition and family values, and to ensure the health and safety of your family.

- View public fireworks display from at least 500 feet.
- Respect the safety barriers the pyrotechnicians have set up.
- Let trained professionals light the fireworks.
- Follow the directions of local firemen and police at public displays.
- Do not touch unexploded fireworks; contact fireman or police immediately. Consumer fireworks, such as bottle rockets, as well as homemade fireworks, have been responsible for 25-30 percent of the fireworks-related injuries over the past ten years.
- Boys 13 and 15 sustain three-fourths of all fireworks-related eye injuries.

Consumer fireworks include cone fountains, bottle rockets, cylindrical fountains, Roman candles, skyrockets, firecrackers, mines, and shells, helicopter-type rockets, certain sparklers, and revolving wheels. **Bottle rockets are the most dangerous. They fly erratically, and the bottles or cans used to launch the rockets often explode, showering fragments of glass or metal.**

Sparklers burn as hot as 1800 degrees, hot enough to melt gold. For children under the age of five, sparklers account for three-quarters of all fireworks injuries. It is true that firework injuries in the United States have decreased during recent years. However, there are still 12,000 fireworks-related injuries each year, with 2,400 of those affecting the eyes.

- One-third of those injuries are caused each year by consumer fireworks.
- One-fourth of those result in permanent vision loss or blindness.
- One in 20 lose all useful vision or require removal of the eye.?

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Virginia Society of Ophthalmology

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