**Fireworks Eye Injuries Have More Than Doubled in Recent Years**

Fireworks sales will be blazing across the country from now through the Fourth of July. As retailers begin their promotions, the [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] joins the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](http://www.aao.org/) in shining a light on this explosive fact: the number of eye injuries caused by fireworks has more than doubled in recent years.

Fireworks injuries cause approximately 10,000 visits to the emergency each year, according to data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.[[1]](#endnote-1) Injuries largely occurred in the weeks before and after the Fourth of July. The CPSC’s most recent fireworks report showed that about 1,300 eye injuries related to fireworks were treated in U.S. emergency rooms in 2014, up from 600 reported in 2012. This is why some ophthalmologists – physicians that specialize in medical and surgical eye care – have to [keep operating rooms on call to treat these injuries](http://www.aao.org/newsroom/news-releases/detail/fireworks-eye-injury-survey-2015-press-release) each year.

To help prevent these injuries, the Academy is debunking four myths about consumer fireworks risks:

1. **Small doesn’t equal safe.** A common culprit of fireworks injuries is the kind often handed to small children – the classic sparkler. Many people mistakenly believe sparklers are harmless due to their size. However, they can reach temperatures of up to 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt certain metals. Even those tiny poppers or snappers can pose dangers. A ricocheting popper burned parts of [Nolan Haney](https://www.yahoo.com/beauty/snappers-sparklers-and-fireworks-meet-the-122185819157.html)’s eye and eyelid when he was 4 years old.
2. **Even though it looks like a dud, it may not act like one**. At age 16, [Jameson Lamb](http://www.aao.org/eye-health/news/teen-nearly-loses-vision-to-fireworks) was hit square in the eye with a Roman candle that he thought had been extinguished. Now 20, Lamb has gone through multiple surgeries including a corneal transplant and a stem cell transplant.
3. **Just because you’re not lighting or throwing it doesn’t mean you’re out of the firing line.** An international study of fireworks-related eye injuries showed that half of those hurt were bystanders. The researchers also found that one in six of these injuries caused severe vision loss.[[2]](#endnote-2)
4. **The Fourth *can* be complete without using consumer fireworks.** The Academy advises that the safest way to view fireworks is to watch a professional show.

“Playing with consumer fireworks around the Fourth of July has become such a beloved tradition that it is easy to forget the dangers they can pose, particularly to the eyes,” said Philip R. Rizzuto, M.D., ophthalmologist and clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “We hope people will take the safest route to celebrating their independence by leaving fireworks to the professionals this year.”

If you experience a fireworks eye injury:

* Seek medical attention immediately.
* Avoid rubbing or rinsing the eyes or applying pressure.
* Do not remove any object from the eye, apply ointments, or take any pain. medications before seeking medical help.

To help highlight the potential dangers of fireworks to children, the Academy has created an [[animated public service announcement titled “Fireworks: The Blinding Truth.](https://youtu.be/BIu1jFLf5Qg)”](https://youtu.be/BIu1jFLf5Qg) It encourages the public and media to view and share the PSA. Visit the Academy’s EyeSmart® website for more [information about fireworks eye safety](http://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-fireworks-eye-safety).

1. [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission 2014 Fireworks Annual Report](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Research--Statistics/Fuel-Lighters-and-Fireworks1/Fuel-Lighters-and-Fireworks-Reports/) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [Ocular firework trauma: a systematic review on incidence, severity, outcome and prevention](http://bjo.bmj.com/content/early/2010/06/09/bjo.2009.168419.full.pdf?__EVENTTARGET=&__EVENTARGUMENT=&__VIEWSTATE=%2FwEPDwUJNDU1NDgwMTIyZGREl3EDvIK%2BoH75q0LCnvxrfaIJZQ%3D%3D&__VIEWSTATEGENERATOR=B320C6F8), *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, 2010 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)