**What You Don’t Know About Fireworks Can Cost You Your Sight**

Even though we can celebrate together this Fourth of July, continue to keep your distance from fireworks – a lot of distance. Every year, people suffer serious eye injuries from backyard fireworks displays. Most of the victims are children and bystanders located nowhere near the pyrotechnics. As Independence Day nears, [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] and the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](http://www.aao.org/) is working to dispel the myths that put people at risk of blindness.

“Most people just don’t see the harm in sparklers, spinners, firecrackers, and bottle rockets, and they learn too late the necessity of wearing eye protection,” said Dianna Seldomridge, M.D., clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “It’s best to leave fireworks to the professionals. But if you choose to celebrate with fireworks, wear safety goggles and take all the necessary precautions to keep your family safe.”

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

* **Myth #1: Consumer fireworks are harmless.** Fireworks can cause blinding eye injuries such as chemical and thermal burns, [corneal abrasions](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-corneal-abrasion) or [retinal detachment](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/detached-torn-retina). If you live in a state where consumer fireworks are legal and have plans to use them, wear [eye protection](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-protective-eyewear).
* **Myth #2: Sparklers are made for kids and aren’t dangerous.** Don’t let their small size fool you; sparklers burn at more than 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That’s hot enough to melt certain metals.
* **Myth #3: Duds are harmless.**Malfunctioning fireworks should be handled with caution.Do not try to relight faulty fireworks. Instead, soak it in water and throw the dud away.
* **Myth #4: Only those handling the fireworks are at risk.** The majority of firework-related eye injuries happen to [bystanders](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28282696). Watch fireworks from at least 500 feet away and make sure everyone is wearing eye protection.

If going to a crowded fireworks display, wear a mask and socially distance as recommended by your local authorities.

If an [eye injury](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-fireworks-eye-safety) does occur, seek medical attention right away.

For more tips and information, visit [www.eyesmart.org](http://www.eyesmart.org/).