



HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

M.S. Montgomery

Fire Marshal

July 1, 2009

Press Release – For Immediate Release

It's Hot and It's Dry

The holiday fireworks sales season is here, and the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office is asking everyone to **BE CAREFUL**, and reconsider their use of fireworks this holiday season. This office, in partnership with other area law enforcement agencies, reminds citizens that fireworks are not legal in most cities, and in certain unincorporated areas of the county.

Any carelessly used firework has the potential to start a fire or cause injury. Because of the drought conditions, there is an outdoor burning ban in unincorporated Harris County. There is also a local declaration of disaster that prohibits that sale, use, or transportation of certain fireworks – specifically, stick rockets and missiles with fins. Except for these two product types, the use of fireworks is allowed, but people are responsible for any fires or damage that may result. Officers will be issuing citations and seizing illegal fireworks.

Please call **281-999-2200** to register any complaints about the illegal sale or use of fireworks this holiday season.

Prohibited use of fireworks in unincorporated Harris County

It is legal to buy, possess, and use consumer fireworks 1.4G in the unincorporated areas of Harris County. However, there are some places you cannot use fireworks, even in the unincorporated county.		
Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 2154: PROHIBITED USE OF FIREWORKS (Subchapter F)		
Violation	Code	Offense
A person may not:		
Explode or ignite fireworks within 600 feet of any church, a hospital other than a veterinary hospital, an asylum, a licensed child care center, or a public or private primary or secondary school or institution of higher education unless the person receives authorization in writing from that organization; You must have the written permission with you at the site, and available for inspection by any peace officer or fire marshal.	2154.251 (a)(1)	Class C, UNLESS the violation results in (1) \$200 or more in property damage, OR (2) bodily injury or death. If so, it is a Class B.
Sell at retail, explode, or ignite fireworks within 100 feet of a place where flammable liquids or flammable compressed gasses are stored and dispensed;	2154.251 (a)(2)	
Explode or ignite fireworks within 100 feet of a place where fireworks are stored or sold;	2154.251 (a)(3)	
Ignite or discharge fireworks in or from a motor vehicle;	2154.251 (a)(4)	
Place ignited fireworks in, or throw ignited fireworks at, a motor vehicle;	2154.251 (a)(5)	
Use fireworks, pyrotechnics, or flame effects inside any building without a permit from the County Fire Marshal.	2154.253 (b)	Class A
A fire marshal, their deputies, or a peace officer may seize illegal fireworks.	2154.304(a)	
A person commits an offense if, without the effective consent of the owner, he recklessly damages or destroys property of the owner.	Penal Code 28.04	Class C
A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally violates a[n outdoor burning] prohibition or restriction established by an order adopted under this section.	Local Government Code 352.081(h)	

For additional information, please contact the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office at 281-436-8000, or visit our website at www.hcfmo.net.

FIREWORKS SAFETY TIPS

Fireworks and celebrations go together, especially during the holidays. But fireworks can be dangerous when used improperly, and can cause serious burns and eye injuries. That's why the Harris County Fire Marshal strongly recommends that you:

LEAVE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS!

If fireworks are legal where you live, and you decide to celebrate with fireworks, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

BEFORE YOU SHOOT:

- ***ALWAYS HAVE ADULT SUPERVISION***
- Do **NOT** let your children buy fireworks unless you are with them
- Only buy from reliable fireworks sellers
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place
- Find a smooth, flat surface -- away from the house and other buildings, or dry leaves and grass
- Be sure to have water handy in case of a malfunction or fire

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO SHOOT:

- ***NEVER ALLOW CHILDREN TO PLAY WITH OR IGNITE FIREWORKS***
- Always read and follow label directions, warnings, and instructions
- Be considerate of your neighbors
- Only ignite fireworks outdoors, and away from houses and other buildings
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks
- Light only one firework at a time
- Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned
- Never give fireworks to small children, even sparklers can cause serious burns
- Never throw fireworks at another person, vehicle, or animal
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers
- Dispose of spent fireworks properly

PLEASE, HAVE A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON !!

2009 4th of July Talking Points

- **Our priority is your safety**

- **It's Dry and It's Hot**
 - Burn ban in effect
 - Fireworks restrictions – stick rockets / missiles with fins

- **Be careful**
 - Any firework can cause a fire
 - Don't leave children unattended
 - Follow simple fireworks safety tips
 - Consider going to a public fireworks display

- **Be considerate**
 - Top public complaint is the trash left behind
 - #2 complaint is noise