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Fireworks Displays and Safety

Every year, fireworks are enjoyed at many events across Canada. Due to some ongoing wildfire situations, many municipalities are now reviewing their safety procedures and liability exposures for events that involve fireworks displays. Fireworks are regulated by the Federal Government under the National Fire Code, the *Explosives Act*, and Explosives Regulations.

Consumer Level Fireworks and General Guidance

There are several things to consider when dealing with fireworks.

When purchasing fireworks:

- ♦ Follow the laws and regulations in the province and town you are operating in. Most jurisdictions require permits for fireworks.
- ♦ Review local information to ensure there are no fire bans.
- ♦ Purchase fireworks from reputable sources that meet safety standards.
- ♦ Do not make your own fireworks.
- ♦ Do not use illegal explosives or firecrackers.

When setting up your fireworks displays, be sure to:

- ♦ Complete a pre-inspection of the site to remove any potential hazards.
- ♦ Read instructions and follow the cautions and warnings on the labels.
- ♦ Store unused fireworks in a closed box away from ignition sources.
- ♦ Setup outdoors in a clear open space. Find hard level surface to ensure stability.
- ♦ Check the wind, fireworks should be discharged away from the spectators and any potential ignition sources.
- ♦ Spectators should be a safe distance away — review product labels for appropriate distancing. Children and pets should be properly supervised.
- ♦ Keep a bucket of water, sand, and a working fire extinguisher on hand and easily accessible.

When running the fireworks show, some important safety tips include:

- ♦ Allow only adults (18 years and over) to handle fireworks. Do not allow anyone impaired by drugs or alcohol to handle fireworks.
- ♦ Do not smoke while lighting fireworks.
- ♦ Light only one item at a time.
- ♦ Wear eye and hand protection. Light at arm's length and stand back.
- ♦ Never lean over fireworks and keep hair and cloths away from fire sources.
- ♦ Never attempt to relight a defective firework.

- ♦ Do not hold live fireworks in your hands.

And lastly, when disposing of fireworks:

- ♦ Ensure fireworks are extinguished and cool before disposing safely. Soak in water for 30 minutes to ensure they are completely cooled.
- ♦ Sparklers should be immersed in water or sand to ensure they are cold after burning out as they remain hot for some time.
- ♦ Do a post site inspection to ensure any fragments or hazards are cleaned up.

Display Level Fireworks

Display level fireworks are a different class and are not available for use without a proper licence. Additionally, they must comply with the rules set forth in the Display Fireworks Manual (DFM). The DFM sets forth licensing requirements, specifications for what explosives and equipment that can and cannot be used, site requirements, operation of the display, and pre and post event requirements including transportation and storage.

We also strongly encourage your organization to:

- ♦ Check municipal and city bylaws, as most jurisdictions require permits for fireworks. Also ensure display fireworks are not prohibited in your jurisdiction.
- ♦ Have a written contract with the display vendor that indemnifies and holds harmless your organization and requires proof of insurance and compliance with the (DFM).
- ♦ Have the event host purchase special event liability with limits of no less than \$2,000,000.

For more information on the safe handling of fireworks, please visit:

- ♦ [Canadian National Fireworks Association](#)
- ♦ [Canadian Safety Council](#)
- ♦ [Canadian Ministry of Natural Resources](#)

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