

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE warns of dangers as fireworks go on sale

Thousands of pounds of illegal fireworks already confiscated

Sacramento – Today begins the sale of “safe and sane” fireworks in nearly 300 communities across California, which has CAL FIRE reminding everyone to do their part to prevent fires caused by fireworks this Fourth of July. Over the past five years, more than 2,500 structure and wildfires have been sparked by fireworks, burning thousands of acres, causing countless injuries and costing millions in property loss.

“Illegal fireworks, or even the unsafe use of sane and sane fireworks, are a major problem every year,” said Chief Tonya Hoover, California’s state fire marshal. “We have a zero tolerance towards the possession, sale or use of illegal fireworks and our officers will be patrolling the streets and internet this week.”

Fire and law enforcement officers across the State are working together to confiscate illegal fireworks off the streets. Earlier this month, CAL FIRE joined a multi-agency fireworks seizure operation in San Bernardino County. The operation resulted in the confiscation of 25,406 pounds of illegal fireworks, 51 misdemeanor citations were issued, as well as two felony arrests. In Placer County, a similar multi-agency operation occurred at the agricultural inspection station in Truckee. More than 1,882 pounds of fireworks were confiscated resulting in 20 misdemeanor citations and seven felony arrests.

“Wildfire activity has significantly increased during the last several weeks and California continues to experience explosive fire conditions as a result of five years of drought,” said Chief Ken Pimott, CAL FIRE director. “Everyone needs to understand the dangers associated with the use of illegal fireworks or misuse of legal fireworks. Any person who starts a fire from fireworks – even accidentally – can be held liable for the fire-fighting costs as well as property damage costs.”

The State Fire Marshal approved “Safe and Sane” fireworks are allowed for use in many communities; however, they are not approved state-wide. Before purchasing these types of fireworks, be sure to check your local laws and follow the instructions to avoid accidents and injuries.

Here are a few tips to help you be safe this 4th of July:

- If fireworks are not legal where you live, do not use them.
- Buy only State Fire Marshal-approved (Safe and Sane) fireworks.
- Have a bucket of water and a hose handy.
- Always read directions and have an adult present.
- Use fireworks outdoors only.
- Use common sense and keep a safe distance.
- Never attempt to re-light or “fix” fireworks.

Visit www.ReadyforWildfire.org for tips on how to prevent a wildfire this Fourth of July.

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