



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Firework Safety

ROCKFORD –Around July Fourth of each year, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks in the United States. Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks - devastating burns, injuries, fires, and even death. According to the National Fire Protection Association,

- U.S. hospital emergency rooms treat an estimated 8,600 people for fireworks-related injuries annually.
- The risk of fireworks injury was highest for children ages 5 to 14, with more than twice the risk for the general population.
- The greatest percentage of injuries occur to the hands and fingers and the largest percentage of specified causes are due to sparklers

Most fireworks are illegal in Illinois. These illegal fireworks include such things as bottle rockets, firecrackers, sky rockets, and roman candles, just to name a few. “Sky Lanterns”, or paper lanterns that contain a small candle or fuel cell that heats the air in the lantern, causing it to rise, are also banned.

“The best thing anyone can do is leave the fireworks to the professionals,” said Rockford Fire Division Chief Matthew Knott. “There are many great shows in the area and it is important to realize that fireworks can not only be very dangerous, they are also illegal.”

The Rockford Fire Department will investigate illegal fireworks activities and will issue the appropriate citations to violators.

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Pat Quinn, Governor

Larry Matkaitis, State Fire Marshal



Office of the State Fire Marshal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 31, 2013

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STATE FIRE MARSHAL ANNOUNCES USE OF SKY LANTERNS ILLEGAL IN ILLINOIS

Sky Lanterns Pose Serious Risk of Injuries and Fires

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has issued notice of the official ban of sky lanterns, also known as aerial luminaries or floating lanterns, in Illinois. Sky lanterns present a potential risk for injuries and fires. The paper made lanterns contain a small candle or fuel cell that when lit, heats the air into the lantern making it rise into the air. Sky lanterns travel a long distance without any control of their final destination.

“The use of sky lanterns during any celebration can turn into tragedy if they land on someone’s house, over any flammable materials or people,” said Larry Matkaitis, State Fire Marshal. “We must protect the lives and property of the citizens we serve, and there is no question that these devices represent a threat to public safety and aviation.”

Sky lanterns are defined as “fireworks” under the Fireworks Regulation Act of Illinois, (425 ILCS 30/2 (a) which states in part that “fireworks mean and include the type of balloon which requires fire underneath to propel.” Sky lanterns have been known to cause residential and forest fires, as well as other losses. In addition, they represent a hazard to aviation and a distraction to vehicular traffic.

The OSFM joins various states in banning the use, distribution and retail sale of sky lanterns including New Hampshire, California, Minnesota, South Carolina, Hawaii, Utah, Tennessee, and Virginia. Other states including Kansas and Missouri and the New York Division of Fire Prevention and Control are also looking into adopting changes to fire codes to regulate the use of sky lanterns. The Federal Aviation Association has raised concerns over the use of floating lanterns as they can be sucked into the engines of airborne aircrafts.

On May 14, 2013, the Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Consumer Fireworks Review Committee voted to put the sky lanterns under the Prohibited Consumer Fireworks list. The OSFM then sent a notice to all fire chiefs, fire departments, municipalities and retailers statewide alerting them about the possible increase in usage of sky lanterns during summer time and special celebrations.

For more information on Illinois fireworks laws, visit the OSFM’s website at www.sfm.illinois.gov/commercial/pyrotechnicsfireworks/index.aspx.

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JRTC, 100 W. Randolph St., Ste. 4-600, Chicago, IL 60601, (312) 814-2693
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Web site: WWW.STATE.IL.US/OSFM/

APPROVED AND PROHIBITED CONSUMER FIREWORKS AND UNREGULATED NOVELTIES

Section 1 of the Fireworks Use Act, 425 ILCS 35/1, defines "Consumer Fireworks" as "those fireworks that must comply with the construction, chemical composition, and labeling regulations of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, as set forth in 16 C.F.R. Parts 1500 and 1507, and classified as fireworks UN0336 or UN0337 by the United States Department of Transportation under 49 C.F.R. 172.101." The United States Department of Transportation assigns the following division numbers to the above-referenced fireworks identification numbers: UN0336 (1.4G) and UN0337 (1.4S). 49 C.F.R. 172.101.

UNREGULATED NOVELTY FIREWORKS

The Fireworks Use Act (Act) expressly excludes the following novelty fireworks from the definition of Consumer Fireworks, 425 ILCS 35/1:

- snake or glow worm pellets;
- smoke devices;
- trick noisemakers known as "party poppers", "booby traps", "snappers", "trick matches", "cigarette loads", and "auto burglar alarms";
- sparklers;
- toy pistols, toy canes, toy guns, or other devices in which paper or plastic caps containing twenty-five hundredths grains or less of explosive compound are used, provided they are so constructed that the hand cannot come in contact with the cap when in place for the explosion; and
- toy pistol paper or plastic caps that contain less than twenty hundredths grains of explosive mixture.

While the Act states that the sale and use of these novelty fireworks are permitted at all times, Section 3.4 of the Act gives municipalities the authority to enact an ordinance prohibiting the sale and use of sparklers on public property.

APPROVED CONSUMER FIREWORKS

As defined by the Act, all Consumer Fireworks must comply with the construction, chemical composition, and labeling regulations of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, as set forth in 16 C.F.R. Parts 1500 and 1507, and classified as fireworks UN0336 or UN0337 by the United States Department of Transportation under 49 C.F.R. 172.101.

In addition to complying with this definition, the Office of the State Fire Marshal requires Consumer Fireworks meet the following requirements to be approved by this Office:

1. The Consumer Fireworks must be labeled "1.4G Consumer" or must be 1.4S fireworks classified as UN0337 intended for outdoor consumer use.
2. The American Fireworks Standards Laboratory (AFSL) must have inspected the Consumer Fireworks. It is the Consumer Distributor's and Consumer Retailer's responsibility to insure that the Consumer Fireworks he or she distributes, sells, offers for sale, exchanges for consideration, transfers, or provides have been AFSL tested. The Consumer Distributor and the Consumer Retailer shall maintain records verifying that such testing has occurred on the Consumer Fireworks he or she distributes, sells, offers for sale, exchanges for consideration, transfers, or provides.
3. The Consumer Fireworks must be ground mounted. No hand held Consumer Fireworks shall be approved.

Approved Consumer Fireworks are limited to the following types of fireworks:

1. Cones including Showers of Sparks, Fountains, and Repeaters (also known as *Cakes)

Single tube fountains must not contain more than 75 grams total of pyrotechnic composition. Cone fountains must not contain more than 50 grams total of pyrotechnic composition. Multiple-tube fountains must not contain more than 200 grams total of pyrotechnic composition.

2. Mines, Comets, Tubes, Shells, Fancy Florals, and Parachutes

These items are firework devices designed to produce low-level aerial effects, which are propelled into the air by a lift charge. Shells will burst at the peak of flight to create a display of stars, reports or other effects or leave a trail of sparks until exhausted. These items contain a maximum of 40 grams of chemical composition and no more than 20 grains of lift charge.

Consumer Fireworks Retailers/Distributors registered with OSFM may sell approved Consumer Fireworks to consumers who have and display a valid Fireworks Permit, issued by the local county or municipality to that consumer.

PROHIBITED CONSUMER FIREWORKS

OSFM prohibits all Consumer Fireworks unless they meet the above-listed approval requirements.

Prohibited Consumer Fireworks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hand held fireworks
- Bottle rockets
- Firecrackers of any size or type
- Sky rockets
- Roman candles
- Chasers
- Buzz bombs
- Ground items other than those identified as Approved Consumer Fireworks
- Helicopters
- Missiles
- Pin wheels or any other twirling device whether on the ground or mounted above the ground
- Planes
- Sky Lanterns, the type of balloon which requires fire underneath to propel same

**This is an increase from the previously approved 200 grams to now allowing up to, not to exceed 500 grams. This was a decision approved by the Consumer Fireworks Review Committee on May 9, 2012.*