



# News Release

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections  
Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.lasfm.org](http://www.lasfm.org)

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Lt. Nathan McCallum**

**Release#:**

**Office: 225-922-0814**

**Date: December 16, 2014**

**Cell: 225-268-2900**

## Fireworks Retailers and Facilities Must Meet Louisiana Standards and Laws

*State Fire Marshal Says, "Safety is paramount when purchasing and using fireworks."*

**Baton Rouge, La** – The Christmas/New Year's retail fireworks season began on December 15<sup>th</sup> and will continue until midnight on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Certainly, the Holiday season brings much joy and happiness; however, improper use of fireworks can quickly lead to tragedy.

"Fireworks related laws, rules and regulations have been established in the State of Louisiana in an effort to afford those who live, work or visit our State the ability to safely enjoy fireworks during the holiday season," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning.

The Fire Marshal says that all wholesale and retail fireworks business operators must be licensed by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Currently there have been 735 retail fireworks permits issued for the 2014 Christmas/New Year's season.

We encourage families to only purchase their consumer fireworks from retail stands that have been inspected and permitted by this office. We would also encourage anyone to contact this office if they see or notice any suspicious or illegal selling of consumer fireworks or any other type of fireworks.

Regarding the type of retail fireworks that are considered illegal in the State of Louisiana, consumers should refrain from purchasing and report to the Office of State Fire Marshal the following fireworks:

- Loose or unpackaged fireworks with no label
- Tubular salutes (M80)
- Cherry Bombs
- Any Class "B" fireworks
- Sky Lanterns

It should be noted that consumer fireworks regulated by the Consumer Safety Commission are the only type allowed to be sold to consumers in the State of Louisiana. These items can be readily identified by a safety warning on the packaging with the labeling such as 1.4G and UN0336.

The State Fire Marshal's Office regulates the fireworks industry and the past has shown that retail stands operate in a safe and compliant manner; however, the uses of these devices rely solely on the consumer to follow the recommended safety practices.

To those citizens of the State who do intend to purchase and use fireworks during the upcoming holiday, the Fire Marshal's Office offers the following fireworks safety suggestions:

- Always read and follow the label directions carefully.
- Always have a garden hose or water bucket nearby for medical emergencies and/or to douse spent or misfired fireworks.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activity.
- Fireworks should be placed on a hard, smooth surface prior to ignition. NEVER light fireworks in your hand.
- Quickly light one firework at a time, and move away quickly after lighting.
- Never point or throw fireworks at people, pets, cars, or buildings.
- Keep fireworks away from small children.
- Do not alter or make your own fireworks.
- After displays, never pick up fireworks that may be left over.

Fireworks that have been ignited and fail to immediately explode or discharge can cause injury, as they may still be active. Children should always tell an adult if they find fireworks rather than picking up smoking or charred fireworks themselves.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is urging everyone to treat all fireworks, as suitable, only for usage by trained and experienced individuals/professionals. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), amateur firework usage endangers not only the users, but also bystanders and surrounding property and structures. Permanent scarring, loss of vision, dismemberment—these are all too often the harsh realities of amateur fireworks use. Pyrotechnic devices ranging from sparklers to aerial rockets cause thousands of fires and serious injuries each year. “When things go wrong, they go wrong very fast, and often with disastrous consequences,” stated Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning.

In recent years, fireworks have been one of the leading causes of injuries serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment. There were 12 documented injuries attributed to the misuse of fireworks in the State of Louisiana during the 2014 season thus far. Fireworks can result in severe burns, fractures, scars, lifelong disfigurement, or even death. The thousands of serious injuries each year typically harm the eyes, head, or hands and are mostly reported in states, such as Louisiana, where fireworks are legal. Even sparklers, which are considered by many to be harmless, can reach temperatures in excess of 1200 degrees Fahrenheit.

Wooded areas, homes, and even automobiles have become engulfed in flames because of fireworks. Firework-related fires have typically caused at least \$27 million in property loss nationally (not adjusted for inflation) in recent years.

A substantial portion of the property loss is due to fireworks typically involving bottle rockets or other fireworks such as rockets/aerial devices. Rockets can land on rooftops or wedge within certain structures and still retain enough heat to cause a fire. Louisiana fire departments have reported 33 fires that have been caused by fireworks thus far in the 2014 season. “A family's home represents the work of a lifetime,” said State Fire Marshal Browning. “Losing your home or having a family member seriously injured because of a fireworks accident would be disastrous.”

There are safer alternatives to using fireworks this holiday season, if the public wants an alternative. Public firework displays are one of those alternatives. These are conducted by trained and licensed professionals. They are the smartest and safest fireworks alternative for everyone. They are established under controlled settings and regulations. Clearly, fireworks are capable of devastating and fatal injuries.

Public displays (unless permitted through the Office of State Fire Marshal or local jurisdiction having authority to do so by this office) and retail sales are prohibited in the following parishes: St. Charles, Orleans, East Baton Rouge, and Terrebonne.

Concerning age requirements, Fire Marshal Browning advised that state law prohibits anyone from offering to sell or selling fireworks to any child under the age of fifteen (15). Fire Marshal Browning adds that parents may be held liable for any damages or injuries caused by their children's illegal use of fireworks. He further advises that anyone found selling fireworks without a proper permit from the Office of the State Fire Marshal will be ordered to "cease and desist" operations until a proper permit has been obtained and properly posted. Browning stated that his deputies will be inspecting fireworks stands during the retail season to ensure they meet the minimum requirements for fire safety and registration.

Browning said, "Due to the fire hazard as well as the inherent risk of injury involved in fireworks, citizens are urged to use extreme caution when handling fireworks to ensure a safe, fire-free holiday. The few moments of pleasure consumer fireworks bring are not worth the risk of property loss, injury, or death. Avoid needless risks."

"Let's Work Together in Keeping Louisiana Safe!"

**END – END – END**