



Fireworks Injuries



"In Illinois, both fireworks classified as Class B1.3 G and Class C 1.4G (also known as consumer fireworks) explosives are illegal for sale and use by the public."

In Illinois for 2019, 126 people were injured and one killed from fireworks between June 23 and July 20. Half of those injured, suffered multiple injuries and children under the age of 11 accounted for 22 percent of those injuries, according to the Illinois State Fire Marshal's report. Victims treated the week before July 4, 2020 ranged in age from 15 to 50 with most being between 30 and 40 years old. "We did see some horrific injuries, there's no question, but most were treated as outpatient type injuries. We had a couple of bad ones that we had to admit but nothing that we couldn't handle," said Dr. Stathis Poulakidas, a trauma and burn surgeon and director of the Cook County Trauma & Burn Unit. "Some of the most serious injuries were caused by mortars that weren't watched carefully, exploding in someone's face or chest, harming their lungs," Poulakidas said.

"There were some bad facial fractures and lacerations. There's skin burns all over. People didn't ignite on fire like you may think but there was a peppering [of burns], almost like a shotgun blast with the mortars," he said.

Again, Fireworks are illegal in Illinois for the average citizen. If you purchased large fireworks in a neighboring state and bring them back to Illinois, you are violating Interstate Commerce Laws, as well as local ordinances.



If you are visiting a state that allows fireworks, please follow these safety tips when using fireworks:

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Avoid buying fireworks that are packaged in brown paper because this is often a sign that the fireworks were made for professional displays and that they could pose a danger to consumers.
- Always have an adult supervise fireworks activities. Parents don't realize that young children suffer injuries from sparklers. Sparklers burn at temperatures to 1800 degrees - hot enough to melt some metals.
- Never place any part of your body directly over a fireworks device when lighting the fuse. Back up to a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks.
- Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.
- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them off in metal or glass containers.

After fireworks complete their burning, douse the spent device with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding it to prevent a trash fire.

For more information on fireworks and firework injuries, please call the River Forest Fire Prevention office at 708-714-3562.