Best to Leave Fireworks to the Experts

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks displays. But along with all the festivities are plenty of visits to emergency rooms – especially during July.

In 2013, eight people died and about 11,400 were injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. And while the majority of these incidents were due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, homemade or other illegal fireworks or explosives, 40 percent were from legal, less powerful devices.

Fireworks also are responsible for thousands of home fires each year. The National Fire Protection Association reports that in 2011, fireworks caused about 1,200 structure fires.

The National Safety Council advises everyone to stay away from all consumer fireworks and to only enjoy fireworks at a public display conducted by seasoned professionals.

Following are some fireworks that are legal for consumers to purchase and use in some states. But just because they are legal doesn’t mean they’re safe. Check out this video by the NFPA.

If They’re Legal

If fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don’t go off or in case of fire

Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the show!