

Help your Bonfire Night go with a bang! (but a safe one)

At Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and Northamptonshire Police, we would always say its best attend an organised fireworks display, but for those who are planning to use them at home, there are tips to remember to avoid accident or injury.

Using fireworks... some tips

Firstly, it sounds simple, but read the instructions on your fireworks. Light them at arm's length using a safety firework lighter or fuse wick. Everyone should stand well clear and never return to a lit firework. It's best to keep a bucket of water handy too.

Fireworks should always be handled by adults.

Sparklers are not suitable for children under five. Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves.

Last tip - It can be a frightening time for pets, so keep furry and non-furry companions safe indoors and be mindful of the effects on pets in your neighbourhood.

Fireworks: knowing the law

Unfortunately, people sometimes use this time of year to misuse fireworks. Fireworks may be beautiful to watch but they can also cause devastating injuries to people and damage to property if they are used in the wrong way. Never throw them or store them unsafely, such as in a pocket.

The laws state:

- You can't buy fireworks if you're under 18.
- Fireworks cannot be set off between 11pm and 7am, except for Bonfire Night, when the cut off is midnight. On New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year, the cut off is 1am.
- You must not set off or throw fireworks (including sparklers) in the street or other public places.
- You should only buy fireworks from registered dealers or licensed shops
- You can be fined an unlimited amount and imprisoned for up to six months for selling or using fireworks illegally. You could also get an on-the-spot fine of £90.

Bonfires - the safe way

Fireworks may often be the main feature of a seasonal display, but bonfires are also a major attraction.

- Before lighting a bonfire, always check the structure is sound and there are no small children or animals hiding inside.
- Position a bonfire away from sheds, fences and trees to avoid flames spreading.
- Never use petrol or paraffin to light a fire. A safer way is to use paper and solid firelighters in two or three places to ensure an even burn.
- Never burn dangerous rubbish such as foam-filled furniture, rubber, aerosols, tins of paint, pressurised gas cylinders, tyres and bottles.
- Have one person responsible for lighting the fire. That person, and any helpers, should wear suitable clothing such as a substantial outer garment made of wool or other low flammable material and strong boots or shoes.
- Never leave a bonfire unattended.

We hope you found our safety tips interesting and that you remember them when you have your celebrations. From everyone at NFRS and Northamptonshire Police, have a happy and safe Halloween and Bonfire Night.

