

Allegan County Sheriff's Office Beat for July 1, 2013

4th of July Fireworks:

Following Safety Tips may Prevent Tragedy

Enjoying fireworks displays at dusk is synonymous with Fourth of July celebrations; however, the Michigan Sheriffs' Association and the Allegan County Sheriff's Office wants to remind everyone those fireworks can be dangerous.

Last year hospital emergency rooms across the United States treated more than 9,600 people for fireworks related injuries. Children under the age of 15 accounted for one-third of those injuries. A mother of three was killed on July 4, 2007 when she was struck by a commercially made firework.

In addition to the 9,600 injuries, fireworks caused:

- More than 17,800 reported fires including:
 - 1,200 structure fires
 - 400 vehicle fires
 - 16,300 outdoor fires.
- These fires resulted in eight reported civilian deaths, the death of one firefighter, 40 civilian injuries, and \$32 million in property damage.

The Michigan Sheriffs' Association and the Allegan County Sheriff's Office provides the following guidelines to minimize injuries when putting on at-home fireworks displays.

Safety Tips and guidelines:

- Obey the local laws and USE COMMON SENSE. New Michigan law (Public Act 65 of 2013) allows local units of government with 50,000 or more residents to prohibit fireworks from 12:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. on the day before, day of, and day after a national holiday. Smaller communities may prohibit use between 1:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. PA 65 also requires retailers who sell fireworks to post signs informing the public of where they can find copies of the Fireworks Safety Act and copies of local ordinances regarding time limits and the use of fireworks.
- Read the fireworks instructions and follow them. If an item looks damaged, do not attempt to use it.
- Purchase fireworks only from reputable established dealers. Legal fireworks are tested as to quality and safety. Never attempt to build your own fireworks.
- A responsible adult should supervise all fireworks usage. Children should watch, but not handle fireworks.
- Fireworks are meant to be used one at a time. Do not attempt to combine or mix fireworks at the same time. Fuses have different burn rates. Actions like this invite accidents.
- Use fireworks outdoors away from structures, vehicles, and trees.
- Fireworks should never be pointed or thrown at anyone. Make sure people and animals maintain a safe distance from the fireworks which are being set off. Use them only outdoors and away from houses and vehicles.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix.

- Caution is important. Use protective eye wear and keep a water hose nearby. Don't try to re-light a dud, soak it in water for 15 minutes and dispose of properly.
- Never place any part of your body directly over a firework when lighting the fuse.
- After fireworks complete their burning, douse the spent device with plenty of water before discarding.
- You may wish to keep pets inside. Many pets that are startled by the noise run off and are lost each year.

Deputies and Law Enforcement Officers will be busy on the 4th. Your patience is appreciated should you encounter someone violating fireworks laws and make a call to 911 Central Dispatch. Violations of fireworks laws will be prioritized and handled when Officers are available.

The Allegan County Sheriff's Office wishes everyone a Safe and enjoyable 4th of July.