

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CONTACT: Rich Sampson, (831) 335-6742 RELEASE DATE: June 30, 2015

CAL FIRE Urges Extreme Caution With Fireworks this Fourth of July

Felton – With the Independence Day holiday rapidly approaching, CAL FIRE is reminding all Californians and visitors to do their part to prevent fires caused by illegal fireworks or the misuse of “Safe and Sane” fireworks. On Sunday, June 28 “Safe and Sane” Fireworks went on sale in approximately 300 communities throughout California. Although fireworks are a symbolic display of patriotism during this time of celebration, they can be dangerous when handled incorrectly or used in the wrong environment.

“As we head into the fourth summer of a severe drought, it is more important than ever that everyone use an abundance of caution to avoid sparking a fire,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, director of CAL FIRE. “Here in California we have a zero tolerance for the use and sale of illegal fireworks.”

There are also legal ramifications when it comes to certain types of fireworks. Possession of illegal fireworks such as sky rockets, bottle rockets, roman candles, aerial shells, firecrackers and other types that explode, go into the air, or move on the ground in an uncontrollable manner can lead to a possible fine of up to \$50,000 as well as prison time or jail for up to one year. Even “Safe and Sane” Fireworks taken into a city or county where they are banned are considered illegal.

The State Fire Marshal approved “Safe and Sane” fireworks are allowed for use in many communities; however, they are not approved state-wide. Before purchasing these types of fireworks, be sure to check your local ordinances and follow the instructions to avoid accidents and injuries.

The public should note that **all** fireworks are illegal to possess, sell or use in 98% of San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties. Purchase and use of Safe and Sane Fireworks is allowed only within the City limits of Watsonville, Capitola, San Bruno and Pacifica. In Santa Cruz County there is a \$1,000 enhancement on fireworks related citations around the July 4th holiday.

“Safe and Sane Fireworks are only as safe as they are used,” said State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover. “Last year alone there were over 300 fires sparked by fireworks. We want everyone to enjoy their celebrations in a safe and legal manner.”

Fireworks Guidelines:

- First check that fireworks are allowed in the area of use
- Make sure the firework has the State Fire Marshal “Safe and Sane” seal
- Purchase only from legitimate organizations authorized to sell
- Have a bucket of water, sand or garden hose available at firing site
- Read all instructions before use
- Never alter, modify or enhance fireworks – use only in the manner intended
- Make sure fireworks have proper clearance from flammable materials including dry grass and brush

For a full fireworks safety guide visit www.ReadyforWildfire.org or watch this short video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G38xe9gzi8>.