



**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
American Pyrotechnics Association**



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APA AND ATF TEAM UP AGAINST ILLEGAL EXPLOSIVES FOR 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATIONS

WASHINGTON – Each year during July 4th celebrations, consumers make a special trip to their local fireworks stand or store to buy fireworks from licensed retailers that meet rigorous safety standards. However, some illegal explosives continue to be sold. To prevent the sale and distribution of such illegal explosives, the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) is encouraging consumers to call the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) hotline from June 26 through July 6 at 1-888-ATF-BOMB (1-888-283-2662) with any information on these illegal activities.

Illegal explosives are defined by the APA as products from non-licensed individuals that are not labeled with a manufacturer's name or a warning statement.

“It's critical that consumers call their local police department or the ATF hotline if they know anything about the sale or making of illegal explosives,” said Julie L. Heckman, Executive Director of APA. “Residents should contact their local authorities if they are unsure about which fireworks are legal in their area.”

“The public needs to be aware that playing with illegal fireworks can lead to injury or even death,” said ATF Acting Director Michael J. Sullivan. “That's why we work with industry and other law enforcement organizations to keep Americans safe by investigating manufacturers and distributors of illegal explosive devices in an effort to keep them out of the hands of consumers.”

Although fireworks regulations differ between jurisdictions, the legal fireworks available for purchase from licensed retailers in 45 states and the District of Columbia, such as sparklers, trick noisemakers, smoke devices and fountains, are manufactured to meet specific local and federal government regulations. “Carefully designed for the maximum visual effect, consumer fireworks used today are the highest quality, safest and most spectacular fireworks ever available in our history,” added Heckman.

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Sullivan urged the public to purchase fireworks only from a licensed dealer and to report the manufacture or sale of illegal fireworks or explosive devices to local law enforcement or the toll-free ATF hotline.

Both the APA and ATF suggest consumers only handle products that are clearly labeled with the name of the item and the manufacturer's name and have instructions for proper use. Having adult supervision and following basic safety tips, such as lighting one firework at a time and keeping a bucket of water or working garden hose nearby are also strongly recommended. In localities where consumer fireworks are not allowed, the APA and ATF recommend enjoying the Fourth of July celebrations by attending a professional fireworks display.

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The APA is the leading trade association of the fireworks industry. The APA supports and promotes safety standards for all aspects of fireworks. The APA has a diverse membership including regulated and licensed manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, importers and suppliers of fireworks and professional public display firms. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts and figures, history of fireworks, and state laws, can be found on APA's Web site at www.americanpyro.com.

About the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is a principal law enforcement agency within the U.S. Department of Justice dedicated to preventing terrorism, reducing violent crime and protecting our nation. The men and women of ATF perform the dual responsibilities of enforcing federal criminal laws and regulating the firearms and explosives industries. ATF is committed to working directly, and through partnerships, to investigate and reduce crime involving firearms and explosives, acts of arson, and illegal trafficking of alcohol and tobacco products. You can learn more by visiting www.atf.gov.

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