

The Fireworks Ban in Spokane is Working!

This July marks the eighteenth year of a complete fireworks ban in Spokane, Spokane Valley, Cheney, Millwood, Liberty Lake and the unincorporated parts of Spokane County. Spokane Fire Department personnel appreciate the dramatic reduction in fires and injuries that were traditionally associated with Independence Day celebrations in our community. Because of the ban on individual consumer fireworks, fireworks-related fires in the City of Spokane dropped from 1,044 in the ten years prior to the ban to just 46 in the ten years after the ban. In a similar manner, fireworks-caused injuries dropped from 290 to 37. In 2009, Spokane hospitals treated 6 injuries, with two of those injuries happening to teens in the City of Spokane and the others occurring outside Spokane County but treated in Spokane. One patient was severely burned and transported to Harborview in Seattle. Five fireworks-caused fires occurred in the City of Spokane last year. Most people understand and respect the purpose of the fireworks ban.

Common fireworks are NOT “Safe-and-Sane”! There are still about 8,000 fireworks-related injuries requiring emergency room care or hospitalization each year in the U.S. during the July 4th period. Most fireworks injuries involve devices that are legal under current federal law. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association for Hand Surgery, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, Center for Injury Research & Policy, Emergency Nurses Association, Fire Department Safety Officers Association, International Association of Arson Investigators, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Firefighters, International Fire Marshals Association and Prevent Blindness America are all in support of consumer fireworks bans throughout the U.S.

Individual fireworks are NOT cheap entertainment! Millions of dollars in direct property loss happens each year in less than a 2-week period as Americans celebrate Independence Day. The Colville Tribe lost over \$15 million in timber on July 4, 2003 after someone lit a bottle rocket from their boat on Lake Roosevelt. In 2006, fireworks caused about \$6 million in damage to schools in Washington State. Firecrackers, bottle rockets and missiles have been illegal throughout the State of Washington for more than 60 years, long before the Spokane ban.

Spokane Fire Department encourages the community to celebrate the Fourth of July by enjoying the annual public fireworks display in Riverfront Park. For additional information on the negative impact of individual fireworks across the United States, please contact the National Fire Protection Association at www.nfpa.org or our public education desk at jdoherty@spokanefire.org
Violations of the Spokane-area ban can be reported to Crime Check at 456-2233.