

## Firework Safety Urged

(KAIR)--Independence Day is just a few days away, and many people may have gotten a head start celebrating the holiday by shooting off some fireworks. However, it is important to remember that those fireworks may not be able to be used in certain areas, and even those that are used, need to be handled correctly to avoid serious injury.

Atchison Fire Chief Mike McDermed says that most fireworks are prohibited within the city limits. "Basically anything that has a Department of Transportation stamp on it is prohibited inside the city limits...that's going to be, what we used to call class C, but what they have changed to is 1.4 gram fireworks. So firecrackers, sparklers, anything that is governed by the DOT is going to be prohibited here."

McDermed adds that if you do celebrate with fireworks outside of the city limits, proper precautions need to be taken. He says that "you should always have an adult present for one. There really shouldn't be a kid discharging fireworks anytime. They should have some water there, or something there available to throw the old fireworks in...you want to make sure you have adequate distance from the display. A lot of people use sparklers and I don't think they realize that sparklers burn at 1,200 degrees. So even though that sparkler has burned itself out, that wire remains hot for an extended period of time."

According to statistics released by the Office of the State Fire Marshall, 45% of hospitals in Kansas reported 158 injuries related to fireworks in 2014, with ten instances of traumatic amputation and three victims suffering hearing loss.

McDermed suggests that Atchison residents attend one of the many public displays in the area instead of shooting off their own fireworks.

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