

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MEDIA RELEASE

4000 Justice Way
Castle Rock, CO 80109

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RELEASE DATE: 06/23/08 RELEASE TIME: 11:00 am CASE NUMBER: n/a

WHAT: Sheriff Weaver Wants Citizens to be Smart and Safe during 4th of July Weekend.

NARRATIVE: DOUGLAS COUNTY: Sheriff Dave Weaver wants to remind citizens that even though there are no current fire restrictions in the county we all need to do our part to be **Smart and Safe** during the upcoming 4th of July weekend.

If citizens are going to be using "fireworks" this upcoming holiday it is important to know what is or isn't permitted in the area that you are using them. Douglas County has several municipalities and each one may have different rules on what is permitted.

The following is in regard to the unincorporated areas of Douglas County to include the Towns of Larkspur and Castle Pines North.

What are "Permissible Fireworks"?

Cylindrical or cone fountains, wheel and ground spinners, illuminating torches and colored fire, dipped sticks and sparklers, toy propellant or toy smoke device, trick noise makers and snake or glow worms are all permissible.

Essentially, a good rule of thumb to go by is, fireworks that leave the ground or produce a loud bang are not considered permissible to use. A few examples may be; cherry bombs, roman candles, firecrackers, bottle rockets, shells and rockets, M-80s and M-100s, and helicopters.

What is the Law?

All fireworks other than those considered as permissible are considered as illegal for use in the State of Colorado. Use of illegal fireworks in the unincorporated county areas is considered a class 3 misdemeanor and can be punished by a fine of up to \$750.00 and/or imprisonment.

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the fire departments that service the county have a stringent permitting and inspection process for retail fireworks sales. The primary objectives of this process are to ensure that the fireworks offered at the fireworks stand are legal under state statute; that the sales site is operated in compliance with the fire code; and that sales to persons under the age of 16 do not occur. The retail sales sites must also meet the requirements of the Douglas County Building and Zoning Departments.

It is illegal for any person under sixteen years of age to purchase fireworks. Violation of this provision may be punishable by a fine of up to \$750.00 and/or imprisonment. All use of fireworks by persons under the age of sixteen must be under direct adult supervision.

The fact that a firework is legal does not reduce the possibility of it starting a fire. In fact, permissible fireworks have caused several fires in the metro area in recent years. Individuals involved with a fire that results from fireworks either legal or illegal can be charged with Arson.

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What does Sheriff Weaver Suggest?

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office recommends that you "*leave fireworks alone and see a professional display.*"

If you must use fireworks we offer the following suggestions to make your Fourth of July holiday safer...

- Please use the 911 system for true emergencies and not for fireworks complaints. Use the non-emergency phone number (303-660-7500) to register fireworks complaints and to avoid overloading the 911 system potentially delaying response for true emergencies.
- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Sparklers considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Children cannot understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.
- Older children should only be permitted to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Do not allow any running or horseplay. Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.
- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Do not dispose of used fireworks in a combustible container.
- Ensure that fireworks are completely extinguished by soaking them in water prior to disposal.

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