



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**FIRE**  
DEPARTMENT

101 NORTH MAIN STREET  
HARRISONBURG, VA 22802  
OFFICE (540) 432-7703

For Immediate Release – July 1, 2024

Contact: Mike Armstrong  
HFD Deputy Fire Marshal  
540-432-7703

## HFD urges community to refrain from use of fireworks

HARRISONBURG, Va. – As many prepare to celebrate Independence Day, the Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) is reminding community members and visitors about ordinances surrounding fireworks and sparklers within City limits.

All fireworks and sparklers are illegal in the City of Harrisonburg. This includes the possession, sale and use of such items.

Fireworks started an estimated 19,500 fires in 2018, according to the National Fire Protection Association, including 1,900 structure fires, 500 vehicle fires, and 17,100 outside and other fires. These fires caused five deaths, 46 injuries and \$105 million in direct property damage. Hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,100 people for fireworks-related injuries in 2018 – half of those injuries were to the extremities and 34 percent were to the eye or other parts of the head.

Additionally, many injuries are caused by sparklers, which burn between 1,200 and 2,000 degrees.

“We want everyone to enjoy the planned celebration of Independence Day,” HFD Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. “We simply do not want the celebration to end in tragedy. Last year, a member of the community suffered serious injuries resulting from thrown fireworks and we are asking for our community to be partners in safety.”

Additionally, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality recently issued a Drought Warning Advisory Declaration for the Harrisonburg area due to lack of significant rainfall, which has resulted in severely dry conditions. Sparks from fireworks could quickly cause a fire which, due to dry conditions, could spread rapidly.

“We ask that everyone be a good neighbor when you decide how to celebrate Independence Day in The Friendly City,” HFD Deputy Fire Marshal Mike Armstrong said. “Remember that even Virginia-legal fireworks can be traumatic for pets, livestock and your neighbors, with the noise potentially negatively affecting many in our area. Some have even experienced events in their lives that fireworks can cause to be relived in a negative way. So, in addition to the fire and physical injury dangers



(Image courtesy of the National Fire Protection Association)

associated with shooting off fireworks, please remember that not everyone enjoys fireworks – in fact, they can be very distressing for many.”

Find more information on fireworks and outdoor fire safety tips at <https://harrisonburgva.gov/independence-day-safety>.

*The **Harrisonburg Fire Department** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.*

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,990 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*

###