



Title: **Keep people and property safe July 4**
 Author: Your turn Kevin J. Martin Guest Columnist
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Your turn

Kevin J. Martin
 Guest Columnist

Fourth of July fireworks are a long-standing tradition for people of all ages. Watching a display put on by professionals is the best way to keep loved ones safe, but some choose personal-use fireworks. The Illinois Insurance Association and its member companies urge residents to be aware of the risk, consider the consequences and use caution.

Fireworks, by nature, are dangerous explosives. Wayward sparks or misfires can set fire to buildings, vehicles, anything combustible. Hundreds of individuals seek medical attention each year due to fireworks-related burns, eye and limb injuries, even death. Children between five and nine years old hurt by sparklers account for more than one quarter of fireworks-related emergency room visits according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Keep the following tips in mind if you will be using

fireworks this holiday:

- Follow local, state, and federal fireworks laws.
 - Personal-use fireworks should be properly packaged, include directions, and come from a licensed seller.
 - Allow only adults to handle fireworks.
 - Light fireworks outside in a clear, flat, open area away from buildings.
 - Wear safety glasses when igniting fireworks and shoot them one at a time.
 - Put a fire extinguisher as well as a full water bucket or garden hose near the light-off area.
 - Never reignite a dud. Thoroughly soak the non-functioning firework with water and then throw it away.
 - Extinguish spent fireworks with water and place them in a metal trash can when sufficiently cooled.
- Enjoy the holiday, but take precautions to keep people and property safe!

Kevin J. Martin, executive director, Illinois Insurance Association