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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2020

Wolf Administration Urges Pennsylvanians to Celebrate Safely on the Fourth

Harrisburg, PA – As millions of Pennsylvanians prepare to celebrate Independence Day, the Wolf Administration is urging residents to take the necessary steps to protect both loved ones and property.

“Fireworks aren’t toys,” said State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego. “Pennsylvanians deserve memorable and safe holiday gatherings now more than ever. We want people to be aware of the simple steps they can take to ensure a fireworks display doesn’t end with a call to the fire department or trip to an emergency room.”

The Consumer Product Safety Commission [reported](#) that in 2018, there were five nonprofessional fireworks-related deaths and an estimated 9,100 patients were treated for fireworks injuries in hospital emergency rooms, nationwide. Approximately half of the injuries reported were burns, with the head, eyes, face, or ears, being the most frequently impacted part of the body. Thirty-six percent of those injuries involved children under the age of 15.

Trego gave the following suggestions:

- **Never** allow children to play with fireworks, even sparklers, which can burn at temperatures of at least 1200 degrees.
- Only allow adults to light fireworks one at a time, then quickly back away.
- **Never** point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Keep a bucket of water or garden hose handy in case of a fire.
- **Never** pick up or try to relight fireworks that have not fully ignited.
- After the fireworks have burned, fully douse them with water before picking them up or disposing to prevent trash fires.
- **Never** use fireworks after consuming alcohol, or other medications or substances that can impair judgment or the ability to react quickly to an emergency.
- Whether attending a professional display, or using consumer fireworks, **always** remain at a safe distance from the ignition location.

In addition to the health risk fireworks pose, Pennsylvanians still need to be aware of the ongoing threat of COVID-19. Pennsylvanians are encouraged to continue to practice social distancing and other preventative measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 as the commonwealth works towards reopening.

“Although we have more than half of the state now in the green phase of reopening, it is essential that we remain cautious and continue to take necessary precautions to protect against

COVID-19, even while celebrating a holiday,” Dr. Rachel Levine said. “We all have a responsibility to help protect ourselves, our loved ones and others.”

In addition to practicing social distancing, Pennsylvanians should:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- Wear a mask to protect others, my mask protects you, your mask protects me.

“Improper use of fireworks can cause injuries, as well as fires and other property damage that may lead to increased costs and out-of-pocket expenses related to your own homeowners’ insurance,” said Insurance Commissioner Jessica Altman. “Filing a claim with your homeowners’ insurance could result in an increase in your premium, as well as having to pay any deductibles associated with the policy.”

National Fire Protection Association ([NFPA](#)) statistics show fireworks start more than 18,500 fires per year and cause an average of \$43 million in direct property damage.

Under state law, Pennsylvanians who are at least 18-years-old may purchase and use Class C, otherwise known as consumer-grade, fireworks. Certain restrictions apply, including:

- They cannot be ignited or discharged on public or private property without the express permission of the property owner.
- They cannot be discharged from within a motor vehicle or building
- They cannot be discharged toward a motor vehicle or building.
- They cannot be discharged within 150 feet of an occupied structure, whether or not a person is actually present.
- They cannot be discharged while the person is under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or another drug.

Local ordinances may include additional restrictions, so always check with your municipality before purchasing or using Class C fireworks.