



Community Safety Department Fire Brigade Services Division

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FIREWORKS

❁ SITUATION

During the festive season many ignorant civilians will set off fireworks without the permission of the Fire Chief (Chief Fire Officer) within the municipal boundaries. This selfish act may cause a fire hazard, disturbance in the form of loud sound and in severe cases, injury.

❁ What are Fireworks?

Simply put fireworks are:

Firecrackers
Starlight's and,
Rockets

Crackers: There are quite a wide variety of cracker sizes available on the market today. From tiny little crackers to the so-called bomb cracker, which is also most dangerous when not, using with the greatest of caution. Most injuries occur because people do not read the instructions on the wrapping before fire off the cracker. Also, no children should be allowed to set off any kind of fireworks without strict supervision from a responsible adult.

Starlight: This is the sparkling stick restaurants put on the birthday cake when you go there on your birthday. This is also the safer pyrotechnics to use by both adults and children.

Rockets: These are a fairly safe type of pyrotechnics if used by following the instructions on the wrapping correctly. Be very careful not to relight a rocket that did not discharged the first time. To be safe, put that rocket in a bucket of sand, douse it with water and throw it away.

❁ Why do some people like to fire off fireworks?

This question can be debated without coming up with one simple answer. The only conclusion we could reach was that, for some or other reason some people just plainly like the loud noise crackers make. That they get a big thrill from setting off the cracker

just to get reaction from other people stays a mystery. Some inconsiderate cracker dischargers will even set off the cracker near small children and or animals.

Rocket dischargers are those who like to entertain their family and friends. No problem with that because the beautiful light made by the rocket really does draw attention. By looking at the different colours made by different rockets one can be swept away to a wonderland of bright colourful exploding light.

Parents like to give a lighted starlight stick to their children to enjoy the children's reaction. Most children like to wave around the lighted starlight and are transfixed by the lovely light it makes. But, some children though might be frightened by the sparkles it makes. Parents should be careful that their children don't throw this burning starlight onto combustible material such as dry grass.

✿ Where and who may shoot off fireworks?

NOWHERE!

No fireworks may be discharged on a private residential premise within the boundaries of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality!

The Fire Brigade Service may grant written permission for the private discharge of fireworks on the following sites only:

- (a) Sports fields not owned by the controlling authority with prior obtaining of (written) approval from the owner;
- (b) Small holdings: Provided that, in the opinion of an authorised member of the Service, the vegetation, shrubs and/or crops on a small holding under consideration permit the discharge
- (c) Any other suitable open spaces not owned by the controlling authority.

Private related discharge of any fireworks must be supervised by a responsible person of 18 years in age and older.

✿ Is it legal to set off fireworks?

NO! It is not legal to set off fireworks, UNLESS you have written permission from the Fire Chief.

The following Regulations make the discharge / handling of fireworks illegal. : -

- ✿ Regulation 9.18(d) of Government Gazette 1604 of 8 September 1972

The selling of fireworks to a person under the apparent age of 16.

- ✿ Regulation 19.9 of Government Gazette 1604 of 8 September 1972

Permit that children under the age of 16 handle fireworks without adult supervision.

- ✿ Regulation 10.34(c) of Government Gazette 1604 of 8 September 1972

The use of fireworks in a public place without the permission of the local authority.

- ✿ Section 38(3) of the Tshwane Fire Brigade By-Laws – Local Authority Notice 267 dated 09 February 2005

The use of fireworks without the permission of the Chief Fire Officer.

✿ Who enforces these Regulations?

The Fire Safety Section has been tasked to organise, co-ordinate and execute *inter alia* the following functions during the festive season. These are:

- ✿ Enforce legislation regarding fireworks;
- ✿ Ensure the safety of public at the shopping malls and large shops with regard to safe evacuation in the event of fire or other hazards

✿ What happens if I breach the Regulations?

Any person who by any act or omission commits a breach of the regulations shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding R5000,00 or to the imprisonment for the period not exceeding 6 months or to both such fine and such imprisonment, and the explosives, if any, in respect, may be confiscated, in which case the cost of disposal thereof shall be borne by the accused.

✿ What can I do when my neighbour or any other person sets off fireworks illegally?

When I can identify the person whom I saw setting off the firework; and I am willing to give a sworn affidavit; and

I am willing to testify in a Court of Law, may I report the person to the Emergency Management Services Desk at (012) 310-6300 or (012) 3107-400.

❁ What is the effect of firecrackers on Animals?

Nothing. Unless you set off the firecrackers.

The National Council of SPCA's plea to the public is: - PUT ANIMALS FIRST. IF YOUR DOG CAN HEAR A GRASSHOPPER EAT, IMAGINE WHAT A FIRECRACKER SOUNDS LIKE

Advice from the National Council of SPCA is to safeguard animals during the festive season includes: -

- * Ensure that all pets are kept indoors
- * If a pet is particularly sensitive to loud noises, consult your veterinarian timeously to enquire about a sedative being prescribed. Homeopathic alternatives are available.
- * Take rabbits or other outdoor animals into a secure and quiet area such as inside an outbuilding.
- * Close curtains and leave on a TV or radio to camouflage the noise of fireworks.
- * Ensure that all pets are properly identified. Make enquiries with your veterinarian or local SPCA about micro-chipping. Second best is a collar and tag.

❁ To help you celebrate safely this Festive Season City of Tshwane offers the following safety tips when using fireworks (after obtaining written approval):

- ❁ Always read and follow label directions.
- ❁ Have an adult present.
- ❁ Buy from reliable sellers.
- ❁ Use outdoors only.
- ❁ Always have water handy (a garden hose and a bucket).
- ❁ Never experiment or make your own fireworks.

- ✿ Light only one firework at a time.
- ✿ Never re-light a "dud" firework (wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water).
- ✿ Never give fireworks to small children.
- ✿ If necessary, store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- ✿ Dispose of fireworks properly by soaking them in water and then disposing of them in your trashcan.
- ✿ Never throw or point fireworks at other people.
- ✿ Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- ✿ Never put fireworks in metal or glass containers when discharging it.
- ✿ The person lighting fireworks should always wear eye protection and never have any part of the body over the firework.
- ✿ Stay away from illegal explosives.
- ✿ Stay away from the hot stuff!! It's a lot cooler!!