



Fireworks!

A Fact sheet provided by the Cunningham Fire Department, Littleton Fire Department, Parker Fire Department, South Metro Fire Department and the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office

The Cunningham Fire Department, Littleton Fire Department, Parker Fire Department, South Metro Fire Department and the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office have joined forces to provide you with some quick facts that pertain to the sales; use; and possession of fireworks particularly in both the unincorporated areas of Arapahoe County and the City of Centennial.

“Firework season” is here and many questions arise as a result. Under State Law the sales and use of “permissible fireworks” cannot be prohibited in unincorporated county areas. Municipalities under home rule can adopt ordinances that are more restrictive than State Statutes including prohibiting sales, use, and possession of fireworks within city boundaries.

The City of Centennial has adopted ordinance 2002-19 which bans sales, use, and possession of all fireworks within city limits. Likewise, the cities of Aurora and Denver have adopted similar ordinances. The maximum fine for possession and use of fireworks within Centennial is \$1000.00.

The “Permissible fireworks” allowed in unincorporated counties are defined under CRS 12-28-101. There are several categories of fireworks within the definition with specific requirements for each type of firework to be designated as permissible. However, a general rule of thumb is fireworks that leave the ground or produce a “report” (a loud bang) are not considered a permissible firework. 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 as provided in section 18-1.3-501 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS).

The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and the above listed fire departments 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 Arapahoe 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 punished by a fine up to \$750.00 and/or imprisonment. All use of fireworks by persons under the age of sixteen must be under direct adult supervision.

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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.

Your Fire Department and the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office recommend 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 numbers for your respective public safety response agencies 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.**

For additional information please contact the Cunningham Fire Prevention Bureau at (303) 755-9202, the Littleton Fire Department at 303-795-3800, the Parker Fire Department at 303-805-0224, the South Metro Fire Department at 720-488-7200 or the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Environmental Crimes Unit at 720-874-4020.