



Advice on organising firework displays



The following guidance is taken from the Health & Safety Executive website. Detailed guidance for organising your own small firework display is available free to download from the website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg124.htm> You are encouraged to access this as it contains a wealth of advice and good practice.

Firework displays should be enjoyable and spectacular occasions – but they obviously need some responsible planning.

If you are organising a major public event, you will clearly need a robust and detailed approach to planning as well as professional involvement.

Guidance is also available on the HSE website to guide organisers when working with a professional firework operators <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg123.htm>

If you are holding a small local firework display you still need to plan responsibly, but the same level of detail is not necessary or expected. Below are some tips and guidance to help you.

Before the event:

- Think about who will operate the display. There is no reason why you should not light a display yourselves provided it only contains fireworks in categories 1, 2 and 3. However, category 4 fireworks may only be used by professional firework display operators.
- Consider whether the site is suitable and large enough for your display, including a bonfire if you are having one. Is there enough space for the category of fireworks being used and in particular to ensure a safe distance between the firework firing area and fallout zone and spectators? Consider any nearby buildings and anything which could be damaged in the fallout zone such as parked cars, greenhouses etc. Remember to check in daylight for overhead power lines, trees or other obstructions. What is the direction of the prevailing

wind? What would happen if it changed? Consider any local hazards which might be affected such as major roads.

- Think about what you would do if things go wrong. Make sure there is someone who will be responsible for calling the emergency services.
- Make sure you obtain the fireworks from a reputable supplier.
- If the display is to be provided by a professional firework display operator make sure that you are clear on who does what especially in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure you have a suitable place to store the fireworks. Your firework supplier or local authority should be able to advise. Fireworks must be stored for a minimum amount of time.
- If you plan on selling alcohol or food these should be well away from the display site.
- Consider adequacy of lighting in public areas (remember it will be dark.....).
- It is helpful to notify local residents of any potential noisy activities or fireworks displays. If they are aware of likely times that they may be disturbed they can take any necessary precautions, particularly if they have pets.

On the day of the event:

- Recheck the site, weather conditions and wind direction
- Don't let anyone into the zone where the fireworks will fall – or let anyone other than the display operator or firing team into the firing zone or the safety zone around it
- Discourage spectators from bringing drink onto the site
- Don't let spectators bring their own fireworks onto the site
- If you will also have a bonfire at the display then you should:
 - Check the structure is sound and does not have small children or animals inside it before lighting it
 - Not use petrol or paraffin to light the fire
 - Have only one person responsible for lighting the fire. That person, and any helpers, should wear suitable clothing e.g. a substantial outer garment made of wool or other low-flammable material.
 - Make sure that the person lighting the fire and any helpers know what to do in the event of a burn injury or clothing catching fire
 - Light the fire after the fireworks to prevent sparks accidentally igniting fireworks
- Never attempt to relight fireworks. Keep well clear of fireworks that have failed to go off

- You must not let fireworks off after 11.00 pm (or 1.00 am at New Year, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Bonfire Night).

The morning after:

- Carefully check and clear the site. Dispose of fireworks safely. They should never be burnt in a confined space (e.g. a boiler)

Checklist for event organisers:

Issue	Action
Professional operators risk assessment & evidence of public liability insurance. Adequate insurance for event organiser	
Liaison with emergency services & local residents, etc.	
Site checks & layout adequate to achieve required safe distances for fall out zone, safety zone and designated spectator area	
Adverse weather monitoring & action plan	
Safe storage & handling of fireworks by competent people	
Emergency arrangements (access, briefing of stewards, means for communications, facilities including fire extinguishers, water/sand buckets, first aid)	

Please contact the Commercial & Business Support Team on 01327 322281 or health.protection@southnorthants.gov.uk if you need any further advice or information.