

Dear City Partners,

Portland Fire & Rescue wants to remind Portlanders to enjoy their holiday safely and legally, so everyone can relax and enjoy this annual celebration.

Each year, people come together on the Fourth of July not only to celebrate America's freedom, but also to spend time with family and friends, barbeque, and, maybe even set off a few fireworks.

However, Oregon law bans possession, use, or sale of any fireworks that **fly, explode, travel more than one foot into the air, or more than six feet on the ground. These fireworks are illegal.**

Why are most fireworks illegal in Oregon? It's not rocket science: Oregon law states that fireworks outside the above definition are dangerous and strictly limit the use of these to professional displays only.

Illegal fireworks cause:

- Countless injuries including trauma and burns from unplanned explosions
- Reoccurring trauma to many of our returning veterans suffering the effects of their service to our Country
- Emotional trauma and anxiety to many small children and animals, who are especially vulnerable
- Enormous property loss each year by causing fires to residences, landscape, and wildland
- Environmental pollution, measureable in both air and noise

In Portland, our difficulty is that many of the fireworks that are illegal in Oregon are legal in Washington and readily available to anyone who can drive across the Columbia River. Given the physical, emotional, environmental, and economic costs, as our population becomes more aware about these real consequences, it will become increasingly clear that illegal fireworks in the hands of amateurs is no longer a 'patriotic' act. **Of special note this year: with our recent extremely hot and dry weather, the risk of fire from both legal and illegal fireworks has increased.**

As in past years, in addition to an education campaign, Portland Fire & Rescue will work with Portland Police to confiscate illegal fireworks and fine offenders. I encourage to help keep your neighborhood safe by reporting illegal firework activity through the City's **non-emergency number, 503.823.3333.**

PF&R supports this time of celebration with our families and friends, and looks forward to watching the professional displays in our region. These displays are well planned events conducted by professionals in low hazard areas. People wishing to avoid the noise of these explosions can hopefully plan ahead to protect themselves and their loved ones. However, people should be able to trust that their neighbors will obey the laws and not place them in jeopardy through this illegal activity. Also, for those intent on breaking the law, know that it is not safe to 'go outside of the city'; in addition to the physical risks and emotional anxiety, fireworks represent an enormous fire hazard to parks, forests, and the wildlife living there.

PF&R's goal is to make the 4th of July safe and enjoyable for all. Please help keep your neighborhood safe and pleasant by not bringing illegal fireworks to Oregon, and educating the Oregonians you know about the law (and the dangers) before they buy illegal fireworks.

Thank you,

Erin Janssens, Fire Chief
Portland Fire & Rescue