



News Release of June 29, 2020



CAUTION URGED WITH FIREWORKS USE; DATES UPDATED

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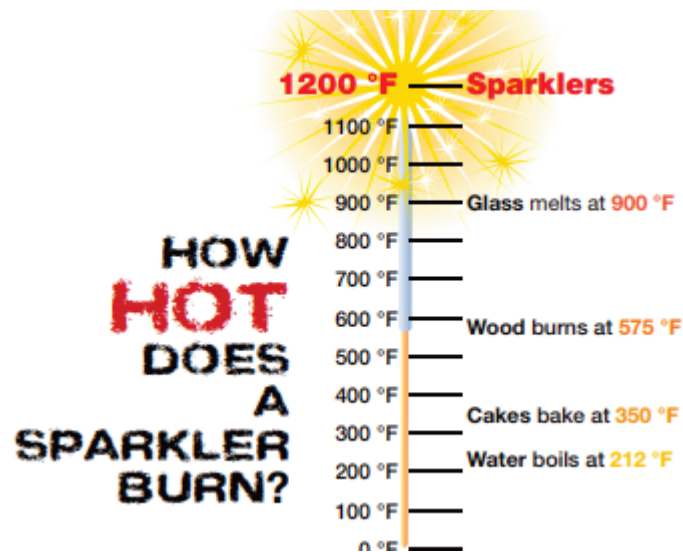


Many people celebrate the Independence Day holiday with fireworks. The best and safest way to do so, is to attend a public fireworks display conducted by licensed pyrotechnics professionals. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Alpena Chamber of Commerce, and generous support from LaFarge Alpena Plant, this year's Alpena 4th of July Fireworks Show at Mich-e-ke-wis Park is going to be outstanding!

For those who prefer to light their own consumer fireworks, Fire officials urge caution. The National Fire Protection Association tracks national fireworks statistics and offers the following insight:

- Fireworks cause over 19,500 reported fires per year, including 1,200 structure fires, 400 vehicle fires, and 16,300 outside and other fires. In Alpena, last year, firefighters were stretched between several incidents at the public fireworks display and a structure fire across town.
- Each year, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treat an estimated 9,100 people for fireworks related injuries, about 44% of which are from burns, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

- Half of the fireworks injuries seen at emergency rooms were extremities: hand, finger, or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.
- Children ages 10–14 had the highest rate of fireworks injury, with more than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks injuries.
- While more robust consumer fireworks, legalized in 2011, account for many of the injuries, many are surprised to find that sparklers make up almost 25% of fireworks nationwide due to their mistakenly benign image and 1200 degree burn temperature.



The Alpena City fireworks ordinance mirrors state law, **which has been changed to allow use of consumer fireworks from June 29 to July 4 from 11 am 11:45 pm each day.** Use on July 5 is now prohibited. Use of consumer fireworks at all other times is prohibited within the City, in the interest of safety, and to preserve peace and enjoyment for residents and pets that are often negatively affected by fireworks use.

On the six days in which consumer fireworks are permitted, such use is restricted to between the hours of 8 am and 1 am.

The ordinance further clarifies that fireworks cannot be ignited without the express written permission of the property owner, and cannot be used by persons under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. **Use of consumer fireworks on City property, including parks and beaches during the 4th of July celebration, is prohibited at all times.**

“Consumer fireworks” are those that leave the ground or explode with a loud noise. Less intrusive “low-impact” fireworks including sparklers, snakes and most fountains remain legal all year round.

“Sky Lanterns” or “Chinese Lanterns” are banned within the City at all times. Chinese lanterns are paper or plastic balloons that incorporate a fuel cell, which is ignited to heat the air in the balloon causing it to rise. In theory, the balloon will remain aloft until the fire goes out and the air cools. In reality, the balloons often become tangled in trees or power lines or land – still on fire – on houses and other combustibles. Use of Chinese lanterns has been quite a problem at the Alpena 4th of July fireworks celebration, and on two occasions balloons landed on unexploded commercial fireworks being prepared for the public display.

Under the ordinance, possession, sale or use of such devices is punishable by up to a \$1000 fine. More daunting though, is Michigan law stating that a person starting a fire through carelessness – such as use of a Chinese lantern or firework – can be held responsible for all damage and the costs of extinguishing the blaze.