

# SUMMER SAFETY

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## Summer Heat Can Be A Killer

Exposure to excessive heat may lead to serious illness or death. It is very important to monitor the symptoms of heat stress and take the appropriate action as soon as possible. Particularly susceptible are people with heart disease, diabetics, pregnant women, the obese, the elderly and people using alcohol, drugs or some prescription medications.

The environmental factors that affect the amount of heat stress a person faces in a hot area are temperature, humidity and air flow. Most of our university buildings are sealed

tight and depend on HVAC (heat, ventilation and air conditioning) systems for proper delivery of the above.

When HVAC breaks down or functions improperly, especially on very hot days, the chances of developing high levels of heat stress are vastly improved.

When exposed to excess heat, the body responds in two ways. First, it increases blood flow. Blood circulates close to the skin so that heat can be dissipated into the environment. Secondly, it responds by sweating. The evaporation of sweat cools the body.

High room temperature makes it difficult for the body to eliminate its own excess heat, and high humidity makes sweating difficult. The body thus stores more heat. As the core temperature rises, the heartbeat increases. The individual will exhibit symptoms of conditions of varying severity.

Some of the most common symptoms of heat stress are:

- Loss of concentration
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Headache
- Giddiness
- Thirst
- Muscle fatigue
- Fainting

**In Excessive Heat,  
Monitor The Symptoms  
Of Heat Stress**

If you continue working in this environment after exhibiting heat stress symptoms, it could be fatal. So— get out, loosen clothing, drink even if not thirsty, get HVAC fixed immediately, call for emergency medical aid.

There is no OSHA standard concerning conditions of excessive heat. NIOSH and ASHRAE guidelines should be followed, and have been used successfully in various grievance procedures. It is recommended that CUNY management make the staff at the university aware of the dangers of heat stress, and of the ways to combat it.

Some references cited:

OSHA fact sheet # 95-16.

NYCOSH fact sheet - Beat the Heat

SACOSH, summer 1995, Heat: A Serious Workplace Hazard

**Ezra Seltzer**

# Fireworks: Spectacular Danger

Fireworks can add fun and excitement to a holiday celebration. But fireworks can also turn a backyard celebration into a rush to the emergency room.

Don't think that fireworks are safe just because they're legal. Legal fireworks carry the manufacturer's name, the words "Class C Common Fireworks," and a warning label. If these are missing, the fireworks are probably illegal, and likely to be extremely unsafe.

Class C fireworks, (e.g. firecrackers) contain up to 50 mg. of gunpowder. Because of the dangers involved, even Class C fireworks cannot be discharged inside most cities' limits without a permit.

Illegal fireworks pose extra dangers. They are typically very powerful and are made without quality control standards, making them extremely unpredictable.

An illegal fireworks explosion in May in San Francisco injured 17 people and demolished a two-unit building.

Be wary of any fireworks that are leaking powder, appear to be quite old, or show any signs of mishandling, as these may fire unpredictably.

Also, avoid fireworks that appear to have been wet and then dried. Water degrades the sensitive and explosive chemicals inside and may affect the fuses.

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat almost 7,500 injuries associated with fireworks, including severe burns, lacerations, amputations and blindness. More than half of those injured are children, and 40 percent of fireworks mishaps injure bystanders.

**Each Year ERs Treat  
7,500 Fireworks Injuries**

Bottle rockets are the single greatest cause of eye injuries requiring hospitalization. They can move as fast as 200 mph in a very erratic path, detonate in mid-air, and their explosive power is enough to turn a "launch site" bottle or can into shrapnel.

Even seemingly innocent sparklers are highly dangerous. Sparklers account for 3/4 of all fireworks injuries in children under age 5 because parents don't realize that they burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit—

hot enough to melt gold — and too hot to give to an excited toddler to hold.

Those who see the injuries and damage from fireworks— physicians and firefighters — agree on this strong warning: play it really safe, and let professionals handle the fireworks. They make a better display and you can watch in safety.

However, if you do choose to purchase fireworks this holiday season, be sure they are legal, discharge them outside the city limits, and follow these simple tips from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

## ALWAYS

- Buy only legal fireworks from reliable dealers.
- Follow directions on label and heed all warnings.
- Use fireworks outdoors in a wide-open area on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Have a hose and a bucket of water handy in case of fire, and drop spent fireworks into the bucket.
- Before lighting, place fireworks in a concrete block and wear safety goggles.

- Light only one at a time with a long-handled lighter or punk.
- Keep the spectators at least 50 feet away.
- Properly dispose of spent fireworks.
- Clean up after the show.

**NEVER**

- Try to re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks.
- Give ANY fireworks to small children.
- Point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Shoot fireworks from metal or glass containers.
- Experiment with, modify, or attempt to make fireworks.

For more information about fireworks safety, contact the National Council on Fireworks Safety (NCFS) at [www.fireworksafety.com](http://www.fireworksafety.com).

To report a dangerous fireworks product or a product-related injury, call the US Consumer Product Safety Commission’s hotline at (800) 638-2772.

**TexasTech University Health Sciences Center  
Michele Freeman, Education Manager.**

## Home Security

Before leaving on vacation, make sure your home is secured.

- Unplug electrical appliances (except refrigerator). Turn off gas pilots and water faucets.
- Notify newspaper service to temporarily refrain from delivering paper.
- Arrange for someone to pick up your mail or have the post office withhold delivery when you are away.



- Lock all windows.
- Leave a key with informed relatives, friends and neighbors and inform them of your itinerary and the telephone number at which you can be reached in an emergency.
- Set a timer to turn lights on and off, or ask someone to do it for you.
- Notify your local police or neighborhood security patrol. Tell them when you are leaving and when you will be back.

**Adopted from *Safety Minder* newsletter —  
S.M. Electric**

## Safety Tips For Avid Gardener

If you use chemical pesticides, select the least toxic material that works. Always follow the label’s directions. Too much pesticide can injure plants, leave residues in soil, kill beneficial insects and make vegetables unsafe to eat.

Wear gloves and long-sleeved shirts, especially near thorny or poisonous plants.

When applying pesticides, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, unlined rubber boots and gloves, and eye protection. Sprays or mists require waterproof clothing. Wash pesticide-contaminated clothes in a separate load.

Keep garden chemicals in locked storage and in their original containers. Never put pesticides in soda bottles or juice jugs where children may be unintentionally poisoned.

During hot weather, garden early in the morning or in the evening to avoid the hot sun. Wear a hat and sunscreen. Drink plenty of water.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about prescription drugs that may cause a reaction when you work in the sun.

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