

KITSAP COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrate Safely, Kitsap!

Skyrocketing fire danger adds to fire officials' concerns about consumer fireworks use

(KITSAP COUNTY, Wash.) – Even as temperatures cool slightly after last weekend's record-setting heat, the wildfire risk continues to climb. The members of the Kitsap County Fire Chiefs Association (KCFCA) are anticipating an exceptionally busy holiday weekend and hoping to reduce the impacts by urging the public to forego private fireworks. In another effort to limit ignition sources, the Kitsap County Fire Marshal already implemented a [Phase I Fire Danger Burn Ban, effective June 26](#).

First responders see the results first-hand when fireworks go awry. Consumer fireworks [cause nearly 20,000 fires annually in the United States](#), according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's latest annual report on fireworks](#) says that fireworks caused over 9,000 emergency room visits in 2018. In 2020, fireworks were the cause of 360 fires and 237 injuries in Washington state. This year, fire officials say that the fire risks are far greater than usual with continued warm and dry weather forecast through the holiday weekend. While escaped controlled fires are the leading cause of wildland fires year-round, fireworks are to blame for the majority of these incidents around the Fourth of July.

Fireworks rules vary between cities and unincorporated areas as well as on local tribes' reservations. To verify what rules apply, see the [Kitsap County Fire Marshal's website](#). The City of Bainbridge Island has permanently banned all consumer fireworks, and other jurisdictions may impose emergency bans if conditions continue to worsen.

Always call 911 when there's an immediate threat to life or property, from fireworks or otherwise. However, in an effort to keep Kitsap 911 phone lines open for true emergencies, persons concerned about fireworks use should make a report on the [fireworks page](#) of Kitsap 911's website.

KCFCA has traditionally encouraged the public to "leave fireworks to the professionals" and attend public displays. However, only one public display (in [Kingston](#)) is scheduled for Kitsap during this year's holiday weekend. NFPA has a [list of alternatives to fireworks](#) that include glow sticks, silly string and noisemakers; an internet search reveals scores of additional fun ideas.

"Our nation's independence is an occasion well worth celebrating," says Poulsbo Fire Department Chief Jim Gillard. "We want to encourage the public to celebrate with their friends, families and neighbors in a safe manner so that everyone can enjoy the Fourth of July." Staying home if sick, refraining from drinking and driving, and limiting the use of consumer fireworks are simple steps with far-reaching effects. "The right choices will help keep us all safe," notes Gillard.

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