

The East Greenwich Pendulum

PROVIDENCE
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RI Assoc. of Fire Chiefs: *Leave fireworks to professionals*

The Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs (RIAFC) is urging Rhode Islanders to leave all fireworks displays to the professionals this Fourth of July. Rhode Island is one of five states that bans the use of fireworks by consumers.

In a typical year, there are more fires reported in the United States on Independence Day than on any other day of the year; with fireworks accounting for half of those fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the

authority on fire safety and prevention, an estimated 9,200 people were treated at hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries in 2006, the most recent year for which statistics are available. More than half (55%) of 2006 fireworks injuries were burns. Contusions and lacerations were second (30%).

"The Fourth of July should be spent with family and friends, not spent in the emergency room," said RIAFC President Timothy McLaughlin, Chief of the

Pawtucket Fire Department. "The risk of injury from amateur fireworks displays is very high, especially among children, and the Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs urges Rhode Islanders to stay safe, and to leave the fireworks to the professionals."

The highest risk of fireworks injury is to school-age children. Children ages 10-14 are 27 times more likely than the general population to be injured from fireworks. Based on the amount of time and quantities in use, fireworks pose a higher

risk of fire death than any other consumer product.

For more information, visit the National Fire Protection Association web site, www.nfpa.org.

The Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs is a professional organization dedicated to improving efficiency, preparedness and emergency response time, to educating the public about fire safety and to providing a support system for Rhode Island fire chiefs, firefighters and emergency medical technicians in times of crisis.