

**PRESS RELEASE**

**June 23, 2003**

**MASON COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
411 NORTH 5<sup>TH</sup> ST  
SHELTON, WA 98584  
(360) 427-9670 EXT. 263**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Safe use of Fireworks

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With fireworks retail stands opening June 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon and closing July 6<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon, Mason County is asking citizens to "Celebrate Safely". State Law allows consumer fireworks to be discharged between the hours of 12:00 noon to 11:00 PM on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM to 11:00 PM June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00 AM to 12:00 midnight on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and 9:00 AM to 11:00 PM on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

There is much we can do to protect children from fireworks injuries. In 2002, 231 fireworks incidents were reported to the State Fire Marshal. There was no adult supervision in 18 percent of these incidents. Supervision is paramount in keeping children safe. Fireworks should not be available to tempt the curiosity of children. Fireworks should be stored in a secured location to prohibit access by children. Only adults should light fireworks.

Statistics collected from incidents in Washington State each year indicate the leading cause of fireworks injuries and/or fires is unsafe use of fireworks. These include: holding, throwing, tampering, leaning over, delayed ignition and uneven surfaces. Children are unaware of how dangerous these devices can be. Don't overestimate your child's ability and judgement in handling fireworks. Set family boundaries, only adults should light fireworks.

Fireworks can also be enjoyed at a community fireworks display and we strongly urge you to attend a public display near you.

We ask citizens to follow these precautions when using fireworks:

- **Before you light fireworks** - "Be Prepared!" Purchase only legal fireworks, available at approved stands. Talk with family members and guests about the laws for your area. Place pets indoors as they may become frightened. Keep a bucket of water nearby in which to place all used fireworks. Have a water hose or fire extinguisher nearby to put out stray sparks. Clear a level area away from things that can burn. Know the emergency number to call for your area, your address/location, and basic first aid. Teach your children to "stop, drop, and roll" if their clothes catch on fire.

- **When lighting fireworks** - "Be Safe!" Set family boundaries. Have a designated adult light all fireworks. Do not allow young children to light fireworks. Use eye protection, wear safety goggles. Light one at a time, move away quickly, and keep at a safe distance until the display is finished. Use only outdoors, away from anything that can burn. To prevent injuries, never throw fireworks and never hold fireworks in your hand.
- **After you finish** - "Be Responsible!" Clean up all debris when finished. Duds can be dangerous; if a device does not light or fire, an adult should wait at least fifteen minutes, approach it carefully, and place it in a bucket of water. Be sure all unused fireworks, matches and lighters are out of the sight and reach of children.

Independence Day is a time to celebrate our freedoms. With this freedom comes a shared responsibility to respect the property and lives of others. Please, "Be Prepared," "Be Safe," and "Be Responsible" when discharging fireworks.

If there are any questions, please contact our Fire Marshal at 427-9670, ext., 273.

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Ron Henrickson, Mason County Administrator