



NEWS RELEASE

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OXENDINE URGES FIREWORKS SAFETY FOR NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

Atlanta -- Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John W. Oxendine and the National Association of State Fire Marshals urges parents to protect their children -- and themselves -- from the dangers of fireworks during the New Year's holiday.

The sale and individual use of any type of firework, except certain kinds of sparklers, is illegal in Georgia. The penalties are a maximum fine of up to \$1,000 and/or a sentence of up to one year in jail. Professional fireworks displays are permitted provided they are licensed through the local judge of probate court.

The law states that the definition of *prohibited* fireworks shall *not* include: "Wire or wood sparklers of 100 grams or less of mixture per item; other sparkling items which are non-explosive and nonaerial and contain 75 grams or less of chemical compound per tube or a total of 200 grams or less for multiple tubes; snake and glow worms; trick noise makers which include paper streamers, party poppers, string poppers, snappers, and drop pops each consisting of 0.25 grains or less of explosive mixture."

The Commissioner said sparklers are legal in Georgia, but should be used properly and with adult supervision.

"According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2007, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 9,800 people for fireworks related injuries," Oxendine said. "Approximately one-third of these injuries occurred among children age 14 years and younger."

Remind children that if they find unexploded fireworks, do not touch them, and immediately contact the local fire department.

"It's traditional to celebrate the coming of the New Year with fireworks," Oxendine said. "I urge our citizens to enjoy them safely by watching a professional display as they mark the arrival of 2010."

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