

This factsheet presents background information mainly for people working with children and families, and students undertaking projects.

How many children are injured in firework accidents?

In Great Britain in the four weeks surrounding Bonfire Night 2001, 1362 people were treated in hospital casualty departments after an accident involving a firework.

685 children under 16 were treated in hospital for injuries caused by fireworks – that is over half of all cases in Great Britain. Many more boys than girls were injured by fireworks – particularly in the 12 to 15 age group.

Are firework accidents increasing?

Firework injuries went up by over 40 per cent between 2000 and 2001. There had been an eight per cent decrease the previous year – although this was shown to coincide with a 30 per cent reduction in sales of fireworks over the same time period. Numbers of firework injuries have fluctuated in the past five years making it difficult to identify trends.

The number of children injured by fireworks increased by just over 35 per cent between 2000 and 2001.

Where do most firework accidents happen?

In 2001 just over 40 per cent of all accidents involving fireworks happened at a family or private party. A further 30 per cent of accidents were the result of casual incidents in the street or other public place. Just over 10 per cent of accidents happened at large, public displays.

What type of fireworks cause most accidents?

In 2001 – as in previous years - rockets caused more accidents than any other type of firework.

Each year there are a large number of accidents caused by sparklers with young children being particularly at risk. In 2001 nearly one in ten firework accidents were caused by sparklers. Nearly seven in ten sparkler accidents happened at a family or private party.

What types of injuries are caused by fireworks?

Most firework accidents result in injuries to the eyes, head, hands or more than one of these areas.

Over 60 per cent of injuries require ongoing treatment from a GP or hospital and may leave permanent scarring

Firework injuries by age in years and sex GB 2001 (4 week period Oct-Nov)

Age	Male	Female	Total
1 and under	18	10	28
2	6	7	13
3	15	8	23
4	22	12	34
5	15	10	25
6	15	16	31
7	20	10	30
8	26	16	42
9	34	16	50
10	28	16	38
11	38	10	54
12	75	7	82
13	69	16	85
14	57	14	71
15	56	23	79

Firework injuries by place of accident GB 1996- 2001 (4 week period Oct-Nov)

	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Family or Private Party	598	421	447	320	378	428
Semi public party (e.g. scouts)	73	56	72	79	56	100
Large public display	158	119	153	132	137	223
Casual incident in street or other public place	442	279	296	226	256	379
Indoors	17	19	19	20	22	23
Other	40	49	65	44	21	75
Not Specified	34	29	4	10	38	5
Total	1362	972	1056	831	908	1233

Further information

The statistics used in this factsheet are drawn from a number of sources. The government's Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System that collected information throughout the UK from 1978 was closed down in May 2003. The enquiry service will be maintained for 5 years. Enquiries should be directed to Information Centre, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Edgbaston Park, 353 Bristol Road, Birmingham B5 7ST, email: infocentre@rospa.com, fax: 0121 248 2001, tel: 0121 248 2066.

Copies of the Annual Reports of the Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System can be downloaded from www.ndad.nationalarchives.gov.uk/CRDA/58/DD/1/detail.html. The reports for 1998 – 2002 inclusive can be downloaded from www.hassandlass.org.uk/query/reports.htm. Visit www.hassandlass.org.uk to interrogate the database for 200-2002 yourself.

Factsheets with more detailed information on a variety of accident topics can be found on the Child Accident Prevention Trust website, www.capt.org.uk or can be provided by post on receipt of a stamped address envelope and a list of the subjects you require.

Revised: July 2009

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