

factsheet

firework accidents

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 the 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 type 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 |

For further information and safety advice:

The Department of Trade and Industry website www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks has information for the public, including young people, teachers, retailers and public bodies on firework safety.

Safety tips for bonfire night can also be found on the Child Accident Prevention Trust website. If you would like a printed copy, please send a stamped, addressed envelope to the address below.

Revised: October 2005

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