



# NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES



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## **Police and Fire urge residents to celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> safely** *Ground-based sparklers are illegal in Howard County*

The Howard County Departments of Police and Fire & Rescue Services are urging residents to celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> safely at home this year. With the county's fireworks show cancelled due to coronavirus safety concerns, officials want residents to be sure to have their own small, safe celebrations at home.

"Fireworks are inherently dangerous, although there are other states that sell ground-based sparklers, we want to remind residents that those are illegal in Howard County," said County Executive Calvin Ball. "Although handheld sparklers and other small "popper" type fireworks are legal, they still can be very dangerous, especially in the hands of small children. While we all wish we could be enjoying the annual fireworks display at the lakefront this weekend, we hope that however you choose to celebrate Independence Day this year, you do so safely and responsibly."

While some may be tempted to replicate the spirit of a fireworks show, officials want to remind residents that in Howard County, the sale, possession, and residential use of devices like ground-based sparklers is illegal. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. While devices known as party poppers, ignitable snakes, snap 'n pops and handheld sparklers are legal, they can be dangerous. Handheld sparklers can reach 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, which can cause significant injuries.

On average, 8,700 people throughout the United States go to the emergency room with fireworks-related injuries during the one-month period surrounding Independence Day, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Those who do purchase legal fireworks should follow these safety tips from the CPSC:

- After a display, children should never pick up fireworks that may be left over, as they may still be active and/or hot to the touch.
- Douse used fireworks with a significant amount of water and leave them for several hours.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case of fire.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activities and never let children handle fireworks.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.

To report the use of illegal fireworks, call the police non-emergency line, 410-313-2200, while the offense is occurring.

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