



NW Insurance Council

## Consumer Alert

**Contact:**

Kenton Brine, President  
Sandi Henke, Deputy Director  
NW Insurance Council  
Phone: (503) 465-6800 / (800) 664-4942

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[kenton.brine@nwinsurance.org](mailto:kenton.brine@nwinsurance.org)  
[sandi.henke@nwinsurance.org](mailto:sandi.henke@nwinsurance.org)  
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# Fourth of July: fireworks spark concerns about safety and insurance

## What to Know

- *Fireworks started an estimated 19,500 fires in 2018, according to the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA).*
- *The risk of fireworks injury is highest for children ages five to nine.*
- *A standard [Homeowners Insurance](#) policy covers fire damage to your home and property, as well as liability protection if others suffer damages or injuries.*

*PORTLAND, OR, July 1, 2021* – Annual Independence Day festivities, including parades and fireworks displays, may be closer to normal this year for Northwest families and communities now that many COVID-19 restrictions have eased. But ongoing dry conditions and excessive heat in the Northwest have increased concerns about wildfire danger, so NW Insurance Council and local public safety officials are reminding everyone to make fireworks awareness and safety a top priority.

“Many communities and counties have announced fireworks bans as well as outdoor burning restrictions – including backyard and campground fires,” said Kenton Brine, NW Insurance Council President.

“This year, people may be extra excited to celebrate freedom from the pandemic, but before investing in personal-use fireworks, we urge everyone to check local ordinances and restrictions, and also make sure your insurance policies are up-to-date.”

Fireworks send over 9,000 people to the emergency room and start over 19,000 fires across the nation each year, according to the most recent data from the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA). NFPA also reports that in 2018, fireworks caused \$105 million in direct property damage.

Carelessness or lack of knowledge can lead to a spoiled holiday or, even worse, severe injuries or property damage. Many communities across the Northwest have enacted ordinances prohibiting all personal use of fireworks or limiting the types of fireworks and/or the times during which they can be used – and some of those restrictions have been changed or updated due to dry, hot summer weather conditions. It’s a good idea to check with your local fire or law enforcement officials to know the laws in your area.

It’s also important to know – in case the worst happens – what your insurance covers if fireworks or “party fouls” result in damage to your home (or your neighbor’s home) or injuries to guests on your property.

“We want everyone to celebrate safely, but it is also good to know that if an errant ‘roman candle’ sets your roof – or your neighbor’s roof – on fire, or a guest is burned or slips and falls at your backyard barbeque, homeowners policies typically provide coverage,” said Brine.

NW Insurance Council and the [Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal](#) offer the following information and safety tips to help you enjoy your Independence Day celebration:

- Contact local authorities or check online for fireworks laws specific to your area.
- Always read and follow the instructions listed on fireworks packaging.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place out of children's reach.
- Do not allow children to play with fireworks. Never give sparklers to children age 5 and younger. Always have a responsible adult present.
- Buy fireworks and all pyrotechnics from reliable organizations.
- Always use fireworks outdoors. Never ignite inside your home or garage.
- Always have water handy to douse hot fireworks (a garden hose and a bucket).
- Never experiment or make your own fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time.
- Never throw or point fireworks at other people.
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.
- Never re-light "dud" fireworks. Wait 15-20 minutes, then soak in a bucket of water.
- Stay away from illegal explosives.
- Keep pets indoors for their safety. For more tips about pets and fireworks safety, visit [The Humane Society of the United States'](#) website.

If fireworks are used near your home, that means your house and property (and possibly that of your neighbors) are exposed to a risk of fire damage and you, your family and your guests are vulnerable to injury.

If an accident occurs, a standard [Homeowners Insurance](#) policy covers fire damage to your home and property, including plants, trees and shrubs (minus your deductible). The same policy also provides coverage if your home is damaged due to the negligence of others (in the event your neighbor's fireworks display ignites your home or landscape).

Your Homeowners Insurance also covers injuries to guests up to the limits of your [Liability Coverage](#).

If damage occurs to a vehicle, that damage would be covered by the vehicle owner's [Comprehensive insurance policy](#), which is an optional coverage most consumers purchase with their auto liability policy.

For more information about insurance, contact [NW Insurance Council](#) at (800) 664-4942.

*NW Insurance Council is a nonprofit, insurer-supported organization providing information about home, auto and business insurance to consumers, media and public policymakers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.*

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