

Safe Fireworks Disposal

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Fireworks can be a fun way to celebrate national holidays, but leftovers after the celebration can pose a problem.

Fortunately, there are a few ways to deal with extra fireworks when the festivities end.



HOUSEHOLDS

If you have unused, misfired or "dud" fireworks, following these safe disposal steps will help ensure the protection of you, your family and waste haulers and handlers:

- Completely submerge fireworks in a large bucket of water and soak overnight.
- Wrap the completely soaked fireworks in plastic wrap or two plastic bags so they do not dry out.
- Place the bagged fireworks in the household trash or take them to your local landfill.
- Contact your local fire department or landfill as other disposal options may be available in your community.
- Never put unsoaked fireworks in the garbage. They pose a fire/explosion hazard to people and property.



If you plan to store unused fireworks that have not yet expired, keep them in a cool, dry place, such as a garage, and out of the reach of children. Never place fireworks on top of an electrical appliance, like a refrigerator or

freezer. The appliance could be struck or damaged through extreme weather events such as lightning or power surges, resulting in the possible ignition of the fireworks. Clean up any loose powder that is spilled on the floor as it could spark, ignited by friction through metal tools and other household items.

FIREWORK STANDS AND STORES

Fireworks at any firework stand or store that sells fireworks should be managed to protect human health and safety and the environment. Steps should be taken to prevent damage to fireworks in inventory, including packing fireworks in waterproof containers or storage units during threatening weather. Fireworks that cannot be sold due to damage or other reasons should be managed according to the following guidelines. If a small quantity needs to be disposed, follow the preceding guidelines for households.

Proper disposal should be arranged immediately or as soon as possible after fireworks are damaged or can no longer be legally sold at that location.

- Unsold fireworks should be returned to the distributor, if possible, for proper storage or redistribution.
- Damaged fireworks that are not wet should be put into watertight containers and stored in a cool, dry environment until proper disposal can be accomplished.
- Wet or damp fireworks should be completely submerged in water inside a closed container and kept submerged until proper disposal can be accomplished. If the fireworks are allowed to dry out, they become unstable and spontaneous combustion can occur.
- In the case of a natural disaster resulting in large quantities of damaged fireworks, arrange for disposal with a hazardous waste contractor or contact the local fire protection authority for guidance.

FIREWORKS AND WATER QUALITY

For visual effect, fireworks are often detonated over or near water and may contain metals that can contaminate water. However, the amount of these potential contaminants is relatively slight in comparison to the volume of water. Since detonation typically occurs well above the water surface, pollutants are dispersed by the wind with little falling directly on the water. Users should remove and dispose any visible debris or litter. Fireworks should never be detonated in the water, since the concussion effect could kill nearby fish or other aquatic life, also it is illegal.

APPLICATION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT (RCRA) TO FIREWORKS

Materials are subject to RCRA when they become waste by being discarded, including when they become unfit for their intended purpose. Any person or entity that first causes fireworks to become hazardous waste is considered a hazardous waste generator for purposes of RCRA. Discarded fireworks may be hazardous waste due to their reactivity, but may also be hazardous for their ignitability (because many contain oxidizer chemicals) and/or toxicity characteristics due to their metal content.

The Arson and Explosive Bureau (a division of the State Fire Marshall's Office) collects old or unwanted ammunition, explosives and other explosive items or components for safe disposal. Call your local law enforcement agency (police or sheriff) to make arrangements for collection or contact the State Fire Marshall directly at 515-725-6145.