

# ST. TAMMANY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT # 1

## Fire Prevention Bureau

1358 Corporate Square Drive  
Slidell, LA 70458



**Phone:** (985) 646-4387

**Fax:** (985) 646-4865

**Fire Chief Larry Hess**

**Fire Prevention Chief Neil Ricca**

## Press Release

**Date:** 12/28/2011

**Contact:** Fire Prevention Chief, Neil Ricca

**Phone:** 985 646-4387

**Subject: Fireworks Safety**

### LEAVE THE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS

FIREWORKS are spectacular to watch, but can be extremely dangerous in the hands of amateurs. When celebrating this New Year's Eve, St. Tammany Fire District # 1 Fire Prevention Chief Neil Ricca urges families to attend public fireworks displays put on by professionals who follow state fire codes.

NFPA, whose mission is to increase fire safety worldwide, strongly supports local fire department efforts to limit and educate the general public use and handling of fireworks due to the unpredictable nature of such materials.

“Playing with fireworks invites disaster”, says Fire Prevention Chief Ricca. “It’s just not worth the risk. As parents and adults, we have a responsibility to protect our children. While most parents work year round to keep their children safe, if they shoot fireworks off in their yards once a year, they are placing their children at substantial risk“, says Ricca.

Statistics from Louisiana SAFE KIDS and the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) show that in 2010, there were approximately 2,500 fireworks-related injuries among children ages 14 and under.

- Among different types of fireworks in 2010, sparklers were associated with the greatest number of estimated injuries at 1,200. There were 900 injuries associated with firecrackers and 400 associated with bottle rockets. Sparklers accounted for nearly half of the injuries to children ages 14 and under.

If you choose to use fireworks, practice extreme caution and remember these safety guidelines recommended by National SAFE KIDS and NFPA and local safety advocates.

- **ONLY ADULTS SHOULD HANDLE FIREWORKS.** Children should leave the area immediately if their friends are using fireworks.
- **DISCUSS SAFETY PROCEDURES WITH YOUR CHILDREN.** Teach children to “stop, drop and roll” if their clothes catch fire and make sure they know how to call 911. Show them how to put out fireworks by using water or a fire extinguisher.
- **READ LABELS CAREFULLY AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.** By law, all fireworks must carry a warning label describing necessary safety precautions.
- **NEVER USE FIREWORKS INDOORS.**
- **BE SURE SPECTATORS ARE OUT OF RANGE BEFORE LIGHTING FIREWORKS.**
- **NEVER AIM OR THROW FIREWORKS AT ANOTHER PERSON.**
- **NEVER PLACE YOUR FACE OR ANY OTHER BODY PART OVER FIREWORKS.**
- **LEAVE PIECES OF FIREWORKS ON THE GROUND AFTER AN EVENT. SOME MAY STILL BE IGNITED AND CAN EXPLODE.**
- **NEVER CARRY FIREWORKS IN YOUR POCKET.**
- **ONLY LIGHT FIREWORKS ON SMOOTH, FLAT SURFACES AWAY FROM HOUSES, DRY LEAVES AND FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.**
- **SPARKLERS ARE NOT TOYS. THEY CAN REACH 2,000° FAHRENHEIT--HOT ENOUGH TO MELT SOME METALS.**

If you choose to use fireworks, follow local fireworks laws;

- **FIREWORKS SALE AND USAGE IS AND HAS BEEN BANNED INSIDE THE CITY LIMITS OF SLIDELL.**
- **STATE LAW PROHIBITS ANYONE FROM OFFERING TO SELL OR SELLING FIREWORKS TO ANY CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF FIFTEEN**

**Ricca offers the following suggestions to safeguard your property from potential firework related damage:**

Remove all pine straw and dry leave accumulations from roof tops and rain gutters.

Reduce your potential for exposure by cleaning the areas next to any structures on your property.

Wet down your roof tops and soak dry vegetation.

Walk around and do a visual inspection of your property prior to retiring for the night.

Please check smoke detectors again, to further ensure the safety of your family.

RICCA WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THE PUBLIC THAT ST. TAMMANY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1 HAS RECEIVED GRANT MONIES TO PROVIDE FREE SMOKE ALARMS TO QUALIFIED RESIDENTS. CONTACT THE FIRE PREVENTION OFFICE @ (985)-646-4387 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

***Fire Prevention... the single most effective strategy for reducing loss of life and property, through education, outreach and enforcement.***

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