



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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NEW YEAR FIREWORK INJURY UP 60%

HONOLULU - According to the Injury Prevention and Control Program (IPCP) of the Hawaii Department of Health, 115 people -- the highest number reported over the past five years -- were treated at Hawaii emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries. Almost all victims were taken to the hospital via private transport and nearly all that were treated were discharged; three were hospitalized. Firework injuries increased by 60% compared to last year.

This is the fifth year in which the IPCP, with cooperation from hospitals and health centers statewide, has conducted surveillance of fireworks injuries during the New Year period. Although the majority of injuries occurred on Oahu, as it did last year, the proportion on Oahu was much higher this year -- 84% (97 injuries) in 2005 compared to 69% (50 injuries) in 2004. Neighbor island emergency departments reported lower numbers: 7% (8 injuries) in Hawaii County and in Maui County, and 2% (2 injuries) in Kauai County. No injuries were reported on the islands of Molokai or Lanai.

Ways in which people were injured was divided among those that were igniting or holding fireworks (78%) and observers (22%). Majority of the injuries reported were due to burns (88%), second to injuries due to blasts and injuries that affected hearing. Physical areas most often reported as injured were hands and fingers (83 injuries), eyes (8 injuries), and head or face (10 injuries).

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At least two-thirds (69%) of those injured were males, and most (64%) were under 18 years of age. There were 10 victims that were between the ages of 1 to 4 years old, 24 victims aged 5 to 9 years old, 23 victims aged 10 to 14 years old, and 15 victims 15 to 17 years of age. Fire works reported to have caused the injury were firecrackers (32 injuries), “flowers” (12 injuries), “spinners” (10 injuries), and “jumping jacks” (6 injuries).

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Hawaii State Department of Health offers the following fireworks safety tips:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Keep a bucket of water in case of a malfunction or fire.

Injuries, including fireworks-related injuries, are preventable. Set safety measures for yourself and those around you every day.

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