



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

New Release

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NEW YEAR'S FIREWORK INJURIES DECREASE BY 25%

HONOLULU - According to the Injury Prevention and Control Program (IPCP) of the Hawaii State Department of Health, 86 people were treated at Hawaii hospital emergency rooms for firework-related injuries. Although firework injuries decreased by 25% compared to the 115 injuries from last New Year's period, the current total of 86 injuries is still the second highest total in the last six years.

As it was last year, the majority of injuries occurred on Oahu, but the proportion of injuries on Oahu was noticeably lower this year – 75% (65 injuries) compared to 84% (97 injuries) last year. Overall, neighbor island emergency departments reported a slight increase from 18 injuries last year to 21 injuries this year. Hawaii County 13% (12 injuries), and Kauai County 3% (3 injuries) injury totals were up slightly with Maui County dropping down to 9% (6 injuries).

"We are always glad to hear of a decrease when it comes to any type of injury, firework-related or otherwise," said Eric Tash, Program Manager for the Injury Prevention and Control Program. "However, during previous New Year's periods, the number of injuries usually correlated with the number of permits issued but this year firework-related injuries decreased by one-third while the number of permits sold increased by 10%. This may mean that more people are taking the necessary safety precautions when it comes to igniting fireworks."

Firework-related injuries were divided among those who were igniting or holding fireworks (86%) and those who were observers (14%). The majority of the injuries reported were due to burns (89%), with hands and fingers (96%) being the physical areas most often reported as injured. Almost all victims were taken to the hospital via private transport and nearly all were treated and discharged. Only one person required hospitalization.

The age of the victims ranged from 2 to 48 years, but more than half (49 of 82, or 61%) were 14 years or younger. Five were between the ages of 2 and 4 years, 21 were between 5 and 9 years, and 23 were 10 to 14 year-olds. Only 13 victims (16%) were older than 30 years of age (age not known for 4 victims) and more than three-quarters (65, or 76%) of the victims were male.

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