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HFD reminds residents of firework ordinances ahead of holiday

HARRISONBURG, Va. – As many prepare to celebrate Independence Day, the Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) is reminding residents about ordinances surrounding fireworks and sparklers within City limits.

All fireworks and sparklers are illegal in the City of Harrisonburg. This includes the possession, sale and use of such items.

Fireworks cause an average of 18,500 fires per year, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires, and 16,900 outside and other fires. These fires caused an average of three deaths, 40 civilian injuries, and an average of $43 million in direct property damage.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, there were nearly 13,000 firework-related injuries in 2017, in addition to eight deaths. Of those, 28 percent were caused by sparklers. Activated sparklers burn between 1,200 and 2,000 degrees. Most firework related injuries occur around the Fourth of July.

"It is imperative to us that residents strictly follow this ordinance – not only for their safety, but also for the safety of those around you," Fire Chief Matthew Tobia said. "Fireworks that are mishandled or malfunction can lead to very serious injuries."

Deputy Fire Marshal Mike Armstrong explained, "Fireworks require far more open space to operate safely than can be found within the City limits. With the high risk of injury, it is best to leave the fireworks to the professionals. Enforcing the laws prohibiting fireworks is designed to ensure public safety."

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire or on Facebook©, Twitter© and Instagram©.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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