

NEWS RELEASE

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VIRTUAL FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION AND FIREWORKS SAFETY REMINDERS

SUFFOLK, VA (June 26, 2020) Although we can't celebrate the 4th of July as we typically do this year with thousands of our closest friends and neighbors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Suffolk will be providing a "Virtual Fireworks" display for all to enjoy!

The video features highlights of several years of Parks & Recreation's "Stars & Stripes Spectacular" events held at the Constant's Wharf Park & Marina, and is available to download at <https://youtu.be/fpY-Pj3DCTA>, in addition to being featured on the City's Municipal Channel several times throughout the day on Saturday, July 4th.

The Suffolk Fire Marshal's Office wants you to play it safe and follow the law when celebrating Independence Day. They note that the use or sale of fireworks in the City of Suffolk is prohibited by City Code. The Code states, "It shall be a violation of this Code for any person to store, to offer for sale, expose for sale, sell at retail, or use or explode any fireworks, except as provided in the rules and regulations issued by the fire official for the granting of permits for supervised

public displays of fireworks by the jurisdiction, fair associations, amusement parks and other organizations. Fireworks means and includes any combustible or explosive composition, or any substance or combination of substances, or article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or an audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration or detonation, and shall include blank cartridges, toy pistols, toy cannons, toy canes or toy guns in which explosives are used, the type of balloons which require fire underneath to propel the balloons, firecrackers, torpedoes, skyrockets, Roman candles, dago bombs, sparklers or other devices of like construction and any device containing any explosive or flammable compound, or any tablets or other devices containing any explosive substance; except that the term "fireworks" shall not include auto flares, paper caps containing not in excess of an average of 0.25 grain (16.2 mg) of explosive content per cap, and toy pistols, toy canes, toy guns or other devices for use of such caps, the sale and use of which shall be permitted at all times.

Those in possession or observed igniting and deploying fireworks can be charged with a Class 1 Misdemeanor; such act or offense shall be punished by a fine up to \$2,500.00 or confinement in jail for up to 12 months, or both such fine and imprisonment.

Each July 4th, thousands of people, most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks. Despite the dangers of fireworks, few people understand the associated risks and unpredictable nature, including devastating burns, blindness, other injuries, fires, and death. Even sparklers can reach up to 2000 degrees Fahrenheit – glow sticks are the safe option for children. Preparing for a day of family barbeques and holiday excitement is no fun if it includes a trip to the emergency room due to improper handling of fireworks.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) notes that fireworks start 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. Most recent statistics note that U. S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 12,900 people for fireworks related injuries, with children younger than 15 years of age accounting for more than one-third of the injuries.

For more information on fire safety, please contact the Suffolk Fire Marshal's Office at 757-514-4540.

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