

# Storing and selling fireworks safely

Advice for anyone selling fireworks



# What you need to do

**Are you planning to sell fireworks? This leaflet has been written to help you do what you need to do to protect the safety of your staff and customers and comply with the law.**

You need to do a risk assessment. This means thinking about what could go wrong and then what action you need to take to try to ensure that it doesn't.

The main questions you need to ask yourself are:

- How could a fire start?
- How could it spread?
- What do I need to do to protect people if there is a fire?

The actions you need to take are actions to:

- prevent a fire starting;
- stop it spreading;
- protect people in the event of a fire.

The risk assessment is about taking sensible, common sense precautions. For example, a fire could be started by a cigarette so you will need to take steps to stop people smoking anywhere near the fireworks.

There is a checklist to help you carry out your risk assessment. It can be downloaded from the HSE website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/explosives](http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives), under *Manufacture and storage*.

# Preventing a fire

## **Do:**

- Do exclude sources of ignition.
- Do stop people smoking anywhere near the fireworks.
- Do restrict entry to the store where the fireworks are kept.
- Do keep fireworks away from space heaters.
- Do follow your supplier's advice on returning unsold items.

## **Don't:**

- Don't store fireworks with caustic substances such as drain cleaners, paint strippers and wood preservatives.
- Don't keep fireworks near fertilisers and products containing peroxides (eg fibreglass hardeners).
- Don't let the fireworks become wet or damp.

# Stopping a fire spreading

## **Do:**

- Do keep fireworks in closed transport packaging.
- Do use suitable storage and display cabinets.
- Do leave fireworks in their closed transport boxes until you are ready to move them to display or storage cabinets.
- Do avoid handling fireworks unnecessarily.

## **Don't:**

- Don't empty fireworks into metal dustbins.
- Don't store fireworks near articles that could catch fire easily, leading to the fire spreading to the fireworks.
- Don't store the fireworks near other articles that could spread the fire.
- Don't store with flammable substances such as white spirit or nylon tights and stockings.
- Don't store near pallets, cardboard boxes and paper.
- Don't store near parked vehicles.

# Protecting people in the event of a fire

## **Do:**

- Do ensure that all fireworks in the shop sales area are kept in a suitable display or storage cabinet.
- Do ensure all escape routes and fire exits are clear and fire exit doors unlocked.
- Do ensure that your fire detection and alarm system (if you have one) is tested and working properly.
- Do ensure that everyone understands that the first priority is to ensure that staff and customers leave the shop as quickly and safely as possible.
- Do carefully consider and manage the amount of stock in the shop sales area.
- Do position transport containers well away from any neighbouring houses.

## **Don't:**

- Don't store or display fireworks anywhere near an escape route or fire exit.
- Don't store an excessive amount either in the shop or in the stockroom.
- Don't store more than you are allowed to store under your licence or registration.

Please note you must take special precautions if you share a building with flats or maisonettes. Contact your licensing authority for more information.

# Summary of the main legal requirements

The main regulations that are particularly relevant to the storage of fireworks are as follows:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require you to carry out a risk assessment and to record it if you have five or more employees. See the checklist on the HSE website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/explosives](http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives) under *Manufacture and storage*.
- The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005 require that you take appropriate measures to prevent fire or explosion; to limit the extent of fire or explosion; and to protect people from the effects of fire or explosion.
- The manufacture and storage regulations also require anyone storing more than 5 kg net of explosive to either register with their local authority or, for larger quantities, obtain a licence (see *Contacts* for further information).
- In addition, there are also general duties under both health and safety at work law and fire safety law.

If you are selling fireworks you have duties under:

- the Fireworks Safety Regulations 1997. This includes requirements on the types of fireworks that can be sold to members of the public as well as on the age of purchase;
- the Fireworks Regulations 2004. If you are selling outside certain times of the year you will need a licence - this is in addition to any licence or registration allowing you to store fireworks.

# Contacts

In the metropolitan counties, ie West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Tyne and Wear, or South and West Yorkshire, the fire service is responsible for licensing and enforcement of the regulations on storage. They are also responsible for licensing the sale of fireworks.

In other areas, the licensing and enforcement authority is normally the trading standards department of your local authority. It is also responsible for licensing the sale of fireworks.

In all areas, the trading standards department is responsible for enforcing regulations on consumer safety and age of purchase.

You can find the contact details for your local trading standards department at: [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk).

Your fireworks supplier is a useful source of advice and information. Your local licensing authority will also be happy to advise and assist.

## Useful websites

HSE Explosives pages: [www.hse.gov.uk/explosives](http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives)

DTI Fireworks pages: [www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks)

The Confederation of British Industry's Explosives Industry Group: [www.eig.org.uk](http://www.eig.org.uk)

British Fireworks Association: [www.b-f-a.org](http://www.b-f-a.org)

## Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/). You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

**This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.**

A web version of this leaflet can be found at:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg407.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg407.pdf).

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