



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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DECLARE INDEPENDENCE FROM INJURIES THIS JULY 4 ***Fireworks, Alcohol, Water Activities, Sun/Heat All Pose Dangers;*** ***County Health and Human Services Agency Urges: "Don't Be a Statistic"***

July 4 is a great time to get together with friends and family for fun in the sun and fireworks. It's also the day that people are likely to be injured due to alcohol abuse, unsafe water sports, overexposure to heat or sun, and improper use of fireworks.

Don't let injuries spoil your July 4 holiday. The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) urges the public to be "safe and sane" while enjoying the holiday.

"Last year, the number of 9-1-1 calls increased 13 percent on July 4," says Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "Every Independence Day, we see an upswing in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, burns due to fireworks, and problems due to overheating and sun exposure. This year, July 4 falls in the middle of a predicted heat wave, so we're encouraging the public to be extra cautious when engaging in outdoor activities."

July 4 is one of the most dangerous times of the year in terms of alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes. Historically, the average death toll for road deaths in the United States is highest on that date. In 2005, in San Diego County, alcohol involved fatal collisions were higher in the summer, with the most in July.

Two thirds of injuries from fireworks in the United States usually occur in the days surrounding July 4. More than half of fireworks injuries involve burns; contusions and lacerations were the second most frequent injuries (mostly to the eyes). Sparklers are the most typical injury to children under age 14. Sparklers burn at temperatures high enough to melt gold.

Exposure to hot weather is especially dangerous to children, because they are least likely to recognize signs and symptoms of dehydration, and will often forget to drink water while they're having fun.

In California, most boating accidents involve collision with another vessel and skier mishaps; in 2005, alcohol was involved in 57 boating-related accidents, 32 deaths, and 36 injuries.

For more information on staying safe this July 4, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Injury Center website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/cmprfact.htm>.

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