

BRIEF CASE

Firework Displays

Firework displays can be a potentially dangerous activity. It is essential therefore to conduct a thorough risk assessment before the event and to follow some simple risk guidelines to ensure safety for both your volunteers and the audience.

Questions to ask in advance

Do you need to inform your local Fire Brigade and Police? Do you require attendance by a first aid association? Have you informed your insurer and the local authority to check whether you require a licence?

Where possible, the display should be organised and operated by the manufacturer of the fireworks or a professional operator. When employing an external contractor, it's vital that you obtain written confirmation that they have adequate Public and Employers' Liability insurance.

If responsible for organising your own firework displays:

- Ensure you have one experienced person in charge and a good organising committee who are clear about their individual responsibilities.
- Keep spectators at a safe distance – preferably 50 metres away; but at least 25 metres away from a firework display. Remember to take wind direction into account. A rope or a strong barrier should be used to clearly mark off the display area which should be at least 50 metres x 50 metres and an additional dropping zone of 100 metres x 50 metres for spent fireworks.
- Keep well clear of buildings, trees and other hazards, such as overhead electricity and telephone cables. The site chosen should have as many entrances and exits as possible and should be kept clear of obstructions. Entrances and exits should be well lit and clearly signposted. Vehicular entrances should be kept separate from pedestrian access.
- To ensure proper crowd control, you should arrange for stewards to be present – at least one steward for every 50 spectators. Stewards should be easy to identify (perhaps by using fluorescent bibs or jackets). The stewarding team should have working torches and be aware of what to do
- In an emergency and should have practised these drills thoroughly before the event.
- Consider the use of a public-address system as a safety measure.

Also:

- A responsible and experienced adult from the organising committee should be given sole control of storage and lighting of fireworks.
- Only use fireworks which comply with BS EN 14035 and only BS categories 1, 2 and 3 may be supplied to the public.
- Do not allow any spectators to enter the site with their own fireworks and clearly display signs to this effect at each entrance.
- Car parking areas should be sited well away from the display area and dropping zone.
- Fireworks should be stored in a metal container and removed one at a time with the lid replaced each time.
- Fireworks which fail to ignite should not be returned to the metal container and no attempt should be made to relight them.
- Fireworks should only be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Firefighting equipment, such as extinguishers, buckets of water and sand, should be available close by.

Managing the end of the event is equally important;

Further guidance is available from the [Department for Business, Innovation and Skills website](#).

Firework Displays KC21.100

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