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FIRE DISTRICT OF SUN CITY WEST

18818 N. Spanish Garden Drive, Sun City West, Arizona 85375

Business: (623) 584-3500 – Fax: (623) 546-8613 – www.scwfire.org

NEWSRELEASE

Contact: Holli Sandeen
Community Outreach Specialist
Phone: (623) 215-1058
Fax: (623) 584-8613

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Fire Safety on the Fourth of July

(SUN CITY WEST) (JUNE 25, 2009) Independence Day celebrations usually signify summer fun, vacations, and the gathering of family and friends. Unfortunately each July Fourth, 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 - devastating burns and other injuries, fires, and even death. In a typical year, there are an estimated 30,100 fires and 9,500 injuries caused by fireworks according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and CDC. Sparklers, firecrackers, and rockets are the leading contributors to these injuries. The Fire District of Sun City West wishes community members a safe and happy holiday and by following a few fireworks safety tips prevent injuries.

- The best way to protect your family is not to use any fireworks at home — period. Attend public fireworks displays and leave the lighting to the professionals.
- Kids should never play with fireworks. Sparklers can reach 1,200-1,800° Fahrenheit — hot enough to melt gold and cause third degree burns.
- Steer clear of others — fireworks have been known to backfire or shoot off in the wrong direction. Never throw or point fireworks at someone, even in jest.
- Don't allow kids to pick up pieces of fireworks after an event. Some may still be ignited and can explode at any time.

- Think about your pet. Animals have sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened or stressed on the Fourth of July. Keep pets indoors to reduce the risk that they'll run loose or get injured.

How and Why Do Fireworks Injuries Occur?

- **Availability:** In spite of federal regulations and varying state prohibitions, many types of fireworks are still accessible to the public. Distributors often sell fireworks near state borders, where laws prohibiting sales on either side of the border may differ.
- **Fireworks type:** Among the various types of fireworks, some of which are sold legally in some states, bottle rockets can fly into peoples' faces and cause eye injuries; sparklers can ignite clothing; and firecrackers can injure the hands or face if they explode at close range.
- **Being too close:** Injuries may result from being too close to fireworks when they explode; for example, when someone leans over to look more closely at a firework that has been ignited, or when a misguided bottle rocket hits a nearby person.
- **Lack of physical coordination:** Younger children often lack the physical coordination to handle fireworks safely.
- **Curiosity:** Children are often excited and curious around fireworks, which can increase their chances of being injured (for example, when they re-examine a firecracker dud that initially fails to ignite).
- **Experimentation:** Homemade fireworks (for example, ones made of the powder from several firecrackers) can lead to dangerous and unpredictable explosions.

For further information, please contact the Sun City West Fire District at (623) 584-3500.

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