

Chubb Risk Bulletin:

Fireworks

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Whether it's hand-held sparklers or a Roman candle, fireworks are an essential part of any New Year's celebration. Unfortunately, the awe and spectacle of fireworks often mean the risks are overlooked.

Did you know that a simple sparkler can burn as hot as a blowtorch?

In inexperienced hands, fireworks can be the cause of serious property damage, bodily injury and even death. Take the Northern Territory for example, where the public sale and use of fireworks is permitted on Territory Day. This year, Territory Day resulted in 24 fireworks-related hospitalisations, including a serious eye injury to a 12-year old boy. In 2016, Northern Territory emergency services responded to 93 Territory Day fireworks-related disturbances, four structure fires, four vehicle fires, eight bin fires and 256 grass fires.

Even though most other Australian states have stringent restrictions on the sale and use of fireworks all year round, illegal fireworks still remain readily available. Last New Year's Eve, two Victorians were killed in separate instances from illegal fireworks.

So what can you do to reduce the risk of fireworks?

Whether it be a work celebration, or the hosting of a fireworks display on your property, here are 10 precautions to mitigate the potential damage that fireworks can cause.

1. Always use an experienced, qualified and licensed pyrotechnician. Verify the pyrotechnician's qualifications, license and insurance – don't rely on word of mouth alone.
2. Verify the pyrotechnicians risk management system. Most state governments have a code of practice for pyrotechnicians and fireworks organisers. The pyrotechnician should be familiar with the relevant code of practice.
3. Ensure fire, emergency services and the local community have been notified where applicable. Provide emergency planning and adequate emergency access to the site. Ensure qualified first aiders will be present during the event.
4. Provide sufficient access to appropriate firefighting equipment in the firing area.

5. Discuss crowd control with the pyrotechnician. Ensure the firing area is secure, barricaded and crowds are kept at a sufficient distance.
6. Monitor the weather in the lead up to the event. Make sure the pyrotechnician is able to respond to adverse weather conditions such as high winds.
7. Ensure the pyrotechnician has a plan for cleaning up the area after the event. Fireworks material, particularly unexploded projectiles, should be treated as hazardous.
8. Remember, the pyrotechnician is just like any other contractor - make sure he or she is fully site inducted and is wearing appropriate protective attire.
9. Advise Chubb well in advance to ensure any insurance policy will not be prejudiced.
10. Above all else, do not allow the fireworks display to proceed if you feel the display is unsafe or does not comply with requirements.

For further queries or risk management advice, Chubb has a team of dedicated risk engineers who can assist Chubb insured clients in the lead up to the holiday season.

Chubb Risk Engineering Services

Chubb Risk Engineering Services is a global network of more than 400 risk consultants who craft practical risk management solutions for our clients. We offer customised programs to help reduce risk and support our clients Enterprise Risk Management programs.

Chubb Risk Engineering Services provides risk management advice in areas including: Property, General Liability, Products Liability, Employers Liability, Machinery Breakdown, Energy, Construction, Transportation and Environmental risks.

Our risk consultants have diverse industry experience and engineering backgrounds which strengthens our risk management offering. Our risk consultants are familiar with local regulations and best work practices, as well as international loss prevention standards.

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