

Fireworks

Community Safety Services

Fireworks are widely used to mark public and private celebrations, as well as traditional events. While adding excitement to occasions, fireworks can also frighten and disturb people and animals, cause annoyance, damage and impact on air quality.

This information sheet looks at the environmental impacts of fireworks and how they can be managed.

Why worry about fireworks?

Noise

Fireworks can be very frightening for people and animals, especially children and the elderly who can be intimidated and scared by firework noise. Disturbing animals and domestic pets can be dangerous as panicked pets can become vicious and destructive, and startled animals have been injured and killed and caused accidents when bolting across a road.

Air Pollution

The bright colours and effects in fireworks are produced by a cocktail of chemicals. Fireworks emit light, heat and sound energy along with carbon dioxide and other gases and residues. The exact emissions will depend on the firework, but as gunpowder is a main component, sulphur compounds are the main pollutant emitted. On and around Bonfire Night (5th November), there is often a noticeable increase in pollution from particulates and dioxins. Approximately 14% of UK dioxin emissions are produced around Bonfire Night – most of this coming from bonfires rather than fireworks. Current research indicates that deposits of pollutants from fireworks do not pose a risk to soil or water.

Storage of fireworks

Under the *Control of Explosives Regulations 1991*, it is an offence to keep fireworks (except those for private use) on premises that have not been registered for this purpose. Individuals can store fireworks for private use for up to 14 days, provided they are kept in a safe place such as a sealed box or tin.

What laws cover nuisance and danger caused by fireworks?

The most recent legislation to deal with fireworks, is The Fireworks Regulations 2004 which were brought in to deal with the antisocial aspects of firework use and to prohibit fireworks being set off between the hours of 23:00 hrs and 07:00 hrs, except on certain dates (see over leaf).

Responsibility for enforcement of the restrictions in these regulations rests with the Police in the area of concern

These regulations also control the sale of fireworks and prohibit retailers selling fireworks that are louder than 120 decibels.

