



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> Safely: Leave the Fireworks to the Pros**

It's that time of the year when nice weather, warm temperatures and outdoor activities signal the approaching July 4th Holiday period. The Romeoville Police Department would like to take this opportunity to warn residents of the dangers of illegal fireworks. Every year, non-occupational fireworks lead to numerous injuries and deaths. A 2015 study conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, found that approximately 11 people die each year from non-occupational fireworks. Fireworks related deaths are often caused by unplanned detonations, direct impacts, or fires. Many are innocent victims who were not using fireworks themselves. Case-in-point, on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2014, an elderly couple from Ohio perished while sleeping when their home caught on fire, ignited by falling debris from fireworks being set off in the neighborhood.

About 67 percent of the annual 10,500 fireworks related injuries occur between June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> and 35 percent are children younger than 15. Fireworks injuries and deaths can be from misuse or malfunctions. Some common misuses include lighting fireworks in one's hand, being too close to lit fireworks, setting off fireworks improperly, mischief, igniting fireworks too close to someone, or dismantling fireworks. Malfunctions can be from errant flight paths, tip-over incidents, early ignitions, and blow outs.

Fireworks are illegal in the State of Illinois. Items such as "Silver Salutes" or "Quarter Sticks" are considered explosive devices and possession is a Class 3 Felony. In Romeoville, it is unlawful for any person to possess, display or allow to be displayed, consumer fireworks and/or display fireworks or any other fireworks within the corporate limits of the village without a valid permit. Possession is not the only concern when it comes to fireworks. A person setting off fireworks can be charged with Disorderly conduct if it is alarming and disturbing others. Of a more serious nature, one may be held criminally and civilly liable if

negligent acts result in property damage, injury, or death. The Romeoville Police Department maintains a strict enforcement policy with regards to illegal fireworks and dedicates officers solely to the enforcement of fireworks violations during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday season.

Even legal items, such as sparklers which burn hot enough to melt glass, are dangerous. The best way to protect your family and friends is not to use any fireworks at home. Instead, attend public displays and leave fireworks to the professionals. The Village of Romeoville will be performing an Independence Day fireworks display on Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at Deer Crossing Park beginning at 9:30 pm.

For more information on fireworks usage, contact Sergeant Chris Burne at 815-886-7219.