

# Rockets Red GLARE

## PURCHASING AND DISPLAYING FIREWORKS

In South Carolina, only rockets less than six inches in diameter and less than three feet long are available for purchase. To purchase any firework, you must be at least 14 years old or accompanied by a parent. To display fireworks, you must apply to the State Fire Marshal for permission at least 15 working days before the show. In order to be allowed to operate fireworks, you must pass a written test and submit notarized evidence of your participation in a minimum of six shows, in addition to being at least 21 years of age. Any person or business wishing to put on a firework display must have insurance with a minimum coverage of \$500,000.

## HISTORY OF FIREWORKS

Fireworks originated in China over 2,000 years ago. Shortly after the invention of gunpowder and explosives, a Chinese monk named Li Tian created the firecracker. At the time of its invention, the firecracker was thought to ward off evil spirits and ghosts. Chinese gunpowder arrived in Europe in the 13th century, and Marco Polo is usually credited with its transport. Although the Chinese invented both gunpowder and the firecracker, the Italians were the first to manufacture fireworks. In fact, many of today's leading firework display companies in the United States are operated by families of Italian descent.

## FIREWORK TRIVIA

- The town of Fireworks, Massachusetts prohibits all forms of consumer fireworks.
- New Castle, Pennsylvania, home to nationally recognized fireworks display companies Zambelli Internationale and Pyrotechnico, is known as the Fireworks Capital of America.
- Fireworks were first used in combat around 1200 AD. Powder was placed into paper tubes with a fuse wrapped in tissue paper and attached to arrows.
- Fireworks were brought to the U.S. during the 1600's.
- Static electricity in synthetic clothing can ignite fireworks. Those who make fireworks typically wear cotton all the



way down to their underwear.

- In today's firework shows, computers are used to control the launching of fireworks, as well as the synchronization of the aerial bursts, with music.

## FIREWORK SAFETY

In 2004, 9,600 people were treated for fireworks-related injuries in hospitals across the U.S. About 69% of these injuries occurred in the month surrounding July 4 (June 19 - July 19). About 40% of all firework injuries occur to children under the age of 15, and 23% of those injuries occur to children under the age of 5. The three types of fireworks that cause the most injuries are firecrackers, rockets, and sparklers. About 50% of sparkler injuries occur to children under the age of 5. To stay safe while using fireworks:

- Never let children handle fireworks
- Do not consume alcohol while using fireworks
- Follow all state laws and use common sense
- Always use fireworks on a hard surface and in clear, open area
- Keep clear of fireworks, especially once lit
- Those lighting fireworks should always wear protective eye-wear
- Only light fireworks one at a time
- Have a working, accessible fire extinguisher, as well as water, nearby in case of emergency
- Beware of strong wind and wind change
- Purchase fireworks from reliable dealers
- Always store fireworks in a cool, dry place

Looking for a place to view fireworks this July 4th? Visit any of these Hilton Head Island locations for what is sure to be a wonderful show.

- Harbour Town - 9 p.m.
- Hudson's on Skull Creek - dusk
- Shelter Cove Marina - dusk **M**

Before you fire off your tribute to the Fourth, read up on South Carolina laws and fireworks facts.

By Mary Carolyn Clanton