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Hydie Miller
hydiemiller@comcast.net
2401 Pennsylvania Ave, Apt 21B25
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Fire departments report that 50,000 fires are caused by fireworks each year. Thousands of people are injured as a result of carelessness around major aerial fireworks. And those local home fireworks set off in your backyard or at a nearby park, increasingly injure and maim children. Pediatricians say never use fireworks at home, and if you want to see fireworks, go to a public display, but don't get too close. Children have lost limbs, and adults igniting the fireworks have burned their hands and faces. Bystanders have actually been blinded by fireworks accidents.

Another reason health officials say "stay home" and "stay away" is because perchlorates used as oxidizers pollute the air and can trigger chronic health problems. Few people know that fireworks are propelled by a kind of rocket fuel launched into the air with substances related to gunpowder. Like a mixed alcoholic beverage, fireworks are a cocktail with toxic affects not just on the families watching them but on the environment as the air is polluted. There are a variety of charging methods used including igniter and electrical charging methods but many of them are dangerous and unpredictable.

There is more. A number of emergency service workers - EMTs, firefighters and medical personnel working night shifts - suffer sleep deprivation and subsequent anxiety from the booms and thunderings. Veterans with PTSD suffer, epileptics have seizures triggered, and elderly citizens can't sleep. Pet owners say dogs become unhinged and can't stop barking; other pets cower, hiding in corners. The average citizen just suffers sleep loss day after day, week after week, during the months when fireworks are randomly and repeatedly set off here, there and everywhere.

In Philadelphia, firefighters and police officers have enough to worry about without responding to random fireworks caused fires and fire accidents. The recent ubiquity of citizens setting off fireworks makes it almost impossible for emergency personnel such as police officers to be responsive in any serious fashion.

Fireworks displays should be legal only for special events regulated by cities and towns. Moreover, they should only be purchased and set off by these towns and cities. The potential damage to life and property is too dangerous. I and every other resident of Pennsylvania should be able to sleep in their own homes without incessant noise and danger from fire and pollution.