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MEDIA ALERT

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Prepare for an Injury-Free Independence Day

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA: – According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 60 percent of all fireworks-related injuries in 2005 occurred between June 18 and July 18. During this period about 45 percent of persons injured from fireworks were children ages 14 years and younger. Sadly, many of these injuries may have been prevented with simple fireworks safety practices.

"Citizens need to know that they have all the control when it comes to preventing fireworks related-injuries," said Ed Altizer, Virginia State Fire Marshal. "For example, attending community fireworks displays with trained professionals or simply practicing extra precaution when handling consumer fireworks can greatly reduce one's chances of being injured during the Fourth of July weekend."

As Virginian's begin to plan their Fourth of July activities, now is the time to think about fireworks safety. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs recommends the following life-saving, injury prevention tips to assist residents with their planning efforts:

- Remember, the safest way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to trained professionals. A number of localities provide safe community fireworks displays. Check with your local parks and recreation division or visit your localities activity website for details.
- Did you know that some fireworks are illegal? Before purchasing fireworks check with your local fire marshal's office to determine which fireworks are permissible in your locality. If caught with illegal fireworks they may be confiscated – or worse you may be charged with a violation of county or state laws.
- Purchase fireworks from licensed/permitted stands.
- If you plan to discharge approved fireworks on your property do the following:

- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that do not go off.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.
- Be sure all people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Do not light fireworks in a container, especially glass or metal containers.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas, preferably in a dry, cool location.
- Always read the directions and warning labels on fireworks. If the fireworks are not marked with the contents, directions, and warning labels, do not light them.
- Supervise children around fireworks at all times.

Practice Fireworks Safety.
Protect Your Family and Friends.
Prevent Fire Works-Related Injuries and Home Fires.