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Media Contact: Dan Curran
DanCurran@CurranPR.com
770-658-9586 (cell)

CONSUMER ALERT

Georgia Eye Experts Say Startling Rise in 4th of July Fireworks Injuries Show Reason to Leave them to the Professionals *Eleven Deaths & 14,700 Injuries in US Caused by Fireworks in 2024* *Doctors of Optometry Offer Tips to Stay Safe*

ATLANTA, Ga. (July, 2025) – The injury and death rate from Fourth of July fireworks increased by a startling 52% and 38%, respectively, last year. Now, Georgia eye experts are urging the public to be extra careful around fireworks during this year's long holiday weekend.

According to a new report by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there were 11 reported fireworks-related deaths, most involving misuse and device misfire/malfunctions in 2024. An estimated 14,700 people were injured by fireworks last year – a sharp increase of about 38% in deaths and about 52% in injuries respectively compared to 2023. There were an estimated 1,700 emergency room treated injuries in 2024 involving sparklers.

Adults ages 25 to 44 accounted for the largest share of reported injuries (32%), followed by people ages 15 to 24 (24%), according to the CPSC. The most frequently injured body parts were hands and fingers (36%) and head, face, and ears (22%). Burns were the most common injury, making up 37% of all emergency room visits.

"Fourth of July fireworks are great to look at and that's where they should be, up in the sky and not in your own hands," said Dr. Frank Winski, newly elected president of the Georgia Optometric Association. "The dramatic increase in injuries and deaths from fireworks means they're just not safe to handle. As an eye doctor with 30 years of experience, I'm encouraging all Georgians to leave the fireworks to the professionals."

"If you find yourself in a situation where you have to handle fireworks, wear safety glasses whenever you are near them and be aware they may go off-course," said Dr. Winski. "If an eye injury does occur, stay calm and seek immediate medical attention from a local doctor of optometry or the nearest emergency room."

"For best results, don't attempt to remove any objects or debris from the eye by yourself," Dr. Winski advised. "Instead, cover the eye with something like a plastic or foam cup to prevent rubbing or touching the eye. Avoid using rinses, eye drops or ointments as they could make the problem worse."

To help prevent eye injuries during fireworks season, the GOA recommends the following tips to help protect and preserve eyesight during the Fourth of July holiday:

- Talk about fireworks safety with children and teens prior to the Fourth of July holiday.

- Do not allow kids to handle fireworks, and never leave children unsupervised near fireworks.
- Wear protective eyewear when lighting and handling fireworks of any kind.
- Store fireworks, matches and lighters in a secure place where children won't find them.
- Avoid purchasing sparklers. Heating up to 2,000 degrees or hotter, sparklers accounted for more than half of the total estimated injuries to children under age 5, according to the CPSC.
- Be aware of your surroundings and only light fireworks when family, friends and children are at a safe distance.

"If a firework-related eye injury does occur, always follow up with a full comprehensive eye exam," said Dr. Winski. "A doctor of optometry will help ensure that the injury heals correctly and can monitor for potential future vision problems."

To find an optometrist in your area, or for additional information on how best to protect your eyes during the Fourth of July holiday, please visit www.GOAeyes.com.

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The Georgia Optometric Association is a statewide professional organization representing over 700 doctors of optometry located in communities throughout the state of Georgia. Founded in 1904, the GOA and its members work to provide the public with quality vision and eye care services. For more information visit www.GOAeyes.com, or follow www.facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation, [www.Twitter.com/GOA_eyes](https://www.twitter.com/GOA_eyes) and [www.Instagram.com/GOAeyes](https://www.instagram.com/GOAeyes).