

THE FIREWORKS CODE

1/ When buying fireworks, make sure they comply with BS7114 and are marked with Complies With BS7114:part2:1988 if separate single garden and display fireworks or Contents comply with BS7114:part2:1988 if selection boxes and multi-packs of fireworks (most brands of fireworks sold in the UK are marked and comply),

2/ You should only use fireworks marked GARDEN FIREWORK or GARDEN FIREWORKS if you only have a small to medium sized garden with little or no fallout zone (these only require a distance of 5m and fallout/debris is quite negligible), and only use fireworks marked DISPLAY FIREWORK or DISPLAY FIREWORKS if you have a large spacious garden with an adequate fallout zone (these require a bigger distance of 25m and fallout/debris is larger and more hazardous) – DON'T be tempted to use fireworks marked DISPLAY FIREWORKS or mixed selection boxes marked DISPLAY FIREWORKS if you don't have enough space to use them safely and properly – falling hot sparks/material/debris could rain down on your audience if they are standing too near the fireworks. 25m fireworks used at 5m away could be dangerous and the risk simply isn't worth it, even with small tame ones marked DISPLAY FIREWORK or DISPLAY FIREWORKS the 25m distance MUST be observed at ALL times,

3/ When you have got the fireworks home, carefully read the instructions on them in advance, and make a list of the things you'll need to set them off safely, in any case you'll require,

- (a) DIY safety glasses/goggles, earplugs or ear defenders, and thick gloves (for setting off garden fireworks), or a hard hat with built in face and ear protection and gloves (if setting off display fireworks or a mix of both garden and display fireworks),
- (b) A deep bucket of earth/soil to bury fireworks in,
- (c) A flat surface or wooden board to stand flat-bottomed fireworks on,
- (d) Suitable posts/wooden boards/poles for wheels,
- (e) A bucket of water for emergencies and for people to put their sparklers in,
- (f) A first aid kit to deal with injuries,
- (g) Suitable launch tubes for rockets, these are included in most rocket packs but if not you may have to buy them separately or ask for them to be thrown in free-of-charge if you're buying single display rockets (DO NOT use bottles to launch them with),
- (h) A hammer to nail up wheels to posts,

4/ Rope or tape off the display area where possible – at least 5m from the nearest firework (assuming garden fireworks) OR at least 25m from the nearest firework (assuming display fireworks), or if a mixed selection box or pack of garden and display fireworks your distance MUST be based on the most powerful firework(s) contained in the box or pack (in this instance use the maximum 25m distance),

5/ NEVER smoke and allow others to smoke whilst handling fireworks and don't smoke where they are set out – you could see more sorts of stars than one if they go off all of a sudden!

6/ DON'T light the fireworks if drunk on alcohol – get somebody else to do it, and DON'T drink while setting off or allow anybody who is setting off the fireworks to drink alcohol – it affects safety instinct and co-ordination!

7/ Only have adults light the fireworks, and don't have more than two doing the lighting at any one time,

8/ Before you light the fireworks, carefully straighten fuses by removing the tape or fuse covers on the fireworks then straightening them gently NOT pulling hard (this can break the fuse off the firework),

9/ Make sure fireworks are placed on flat level ground/or inserted in soft ground or buried to two thirds depth as specified in their instructions making sure they can't fall over,

10/ Ensure rockets are free to rise from their tubes and are also angled well away from houses/property/spectators etc before you light them,

11/ Put up rotating wheels and devices in daylight if you can or sometime well before your display to check they are securely and properly nailed and can spin freely without sticking or flying off,

12/ Ensure rockets are free to rise before you light them, and make sure they're angled away from spectators/houses/nearby property/trees and other hazards,

13/ Put on your personal protective equipment, light the fuse wicks/portfires/safety lighters and away you go!

14/ Light firework fuses at arm's length NOT bending over the firework or leaning over the top while doing so and get away quickly,

15/ If a firework doesn't go, leave well alone and light another – NEVER EVER go back to it and NEVER attempt to modify it/mess with it or throw it onto a fire, this is extremely dangerous!

16/ Sparklers also represent their own problems and many parents tend to turn off and ignore the warnings thinking "oh they're safe nothing can happen to my child with those" then wonder why their children get burned afterwards, therefore the following should be observed;

Everyone lighting and holding sparklers – adults AND children should wear gloves,

Sparklers should be held at arm's length away from the body/the eyes/the face and clothing and other people,

Be aware of and look out for children trying to pick up used sparkler wires, Make everybody put their sparklers into the bucket of water when finished (don't stick them in bins/flower beds),

ONLY allow one sparkler to be lit at a time and DON'T allow several sparklers bunched together to be lit and held; this can cause severe burns to the hands as the sparklers burn faster and hotter.

17/ After the display is over, go round and collect spent firework cases wearing your gloves (some could be hot) and dispose of the spent cases carefully. Any that has fuses still smouldering and any dud firework(s) should be left for at least 30 minutes, then holding them away from you at arm's length fuse end away from you in a gloved hand, drop them into a bucket of water, soak overnight and contact the supplier or manufacturer who will advise on safe disposal. It isn't recommended that you burn the spent cases BUT if you do, then be VERY CAREFUL in doing so and watch out for incompletely fired roman candles/roman multi-shot cakes/barrages with unignited shots left over and duds, and whilst clearing up put these in a safe place to remove any temptation by children to chuck them on the fire and a nasty accident occurring through partly spent and misfired/dud fireworks bursting into life and shooting sparks and effects at people when burned,

18/ Put out any fire thoroughly and make sure it's completely out. Check that all the firework debris (spent cases/cardboard shells/paper/card/plastic) is completely cleared, and clear as much debris as you can but don't go miles out of your way seeking fallen rockets (rockets can travel long distances especially in windy or breezy weather, and in most cases you cannot see where these have landed so avoid those unless they have landed in your garden or wherever you can see them).