

For Further Information, Contact:
Amanda Soelle, WOA Director of Communications
Email: amanda@woa-eyes.org
Phone: 608.824.2200

PRACTICE FIREWORKS SAFETY WHILE CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY
Wisconsin Optometrists Urge Caution to Prevent Eye Injuries—Especially in Children

MADISON, Wis. – With Independence Day celebrations just around the corner, the Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is urging families to stay vigilant when using fireworks—especially when children are involved. Eye injuries from fireworks remain a serious public health concern each summer.

According to the latest report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), 14,700 injuries and 11 deaths were attributed to fireworks in 2024—a significant increase over the prior year¹. Sparklers alone were linked to an estimated 1,700 emergency room visits, despite their reputation as a "safer" option². The most commonly injured areas included hands and fingers (36%), head, face, and ears (22%), and eyes, with burns accounting for 37% of all injuries³.

"Fireworks are dangerous, especially to the eyes, and injuries can happen in seconds," said Dr. Rebecca Kabat, WOA President and practicing optometrist in Eau Claire. "Every year, I see avoidable cases of serious eye trauma—especially among children. A moment of excitement can lead to a lifetime of vision loss."

WOA encourages the public to follow these safety tips when fireworks are present:

- Always supervise children closely.
- Never allow young children to ignite or handle fireworks—including sparklers.
- Avoid carrying fireworks in your pocket or igniting them in metal or glass containers.
- Keep a bucket of water or hose nearby for emergencies.
- Never try to re-light or pick up malfunctioning fireworks.
- Attend professional fireworks shows whenever possible.

If an eye injury occurs, take the following steps immediately:

- Seek medical attention right away, even for seemingly minor injuries.
- Protect the eye without applying pressure—tape the bottom of a paper cup over the eye if needed.
- Do not rub or rinse the eye, as this can cause further damage.
- Avoid using medications or ointments, unless directed by an eye care professional.
- Do not give aspirin or ibuprofen, which can increase bleeding.

Fireworks are a cherished part of Fourth of July celebrations—but one misstep can have lasting consequences. This year, celebrate safely and help protect your family's vision.

To find a licensed optometrist near you, visit www.woa-eyes.org/members.

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About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 640 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA, located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA's website at www.woa-eyes.org.

Footnotes

1. CPSC. (2025, June 25). *CPSC Urges Fireworks Safety Ahead of July 4th Holiday*. <https://www.cpsc.gov>
2. KTUL. (2025, June 25). *Fireworks injuries rise in 2024, sparklers alone send 1,700 to ERs*. <https://ktul.com>
3. Morningstar News / AFSL. (2025, June 25). *Fireworks-Related Deaths and Injuries Reported for 2024*. <https://www.afsl.org>