

Simple guidelines to reduce the risk of nuisance Fireworks don't have to be ear splitting to be fun. They can be enjoyed without causing annoyance to neighbours and their pets. If you have your own firework display remember too much noise can frighten people and that fireworks can cause smoke and pollution:

- Try and give neighbours a few days notice of your firework display, particularly if they are elderly, have young children or pets.
- Use appropriate fireworks – try to avoid really noisy ones. Your supplier should be able to tell you what they are selling.
- Consider timing. If using fireworks for a celebration, a Friday or Saturday is preferable, and make sure they are over by 11pm.
- Let off your fireworks in an open garden area—noise bounces off buildings and smoke pollution can build up in an enclosed area.
- Make sure pets and other animals are safely away from fireworks.
- If a neighbour complains that the fireworks are disturbing them, their pets or livestock, be considerate and think about ending the display as soon as possible.
- Avoid letting off fireworks in unsuitable weather conditions. Strong winds can be hazardous. Still and misty air quality may also cause local air pollution conditions.

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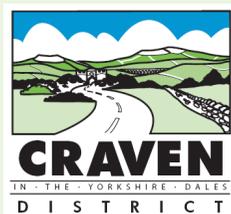
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## Advice on Fireworks



## Noise

Fireworks are widely used to mark public and private celebrations, as well as traditional events. While adding sparkle and excitement to occasions, fireworks can also frighten and disturb people and animals, cause annoyance, damage and impact on air quality. In particular children the elderly can be intimidated and scared by firework noise.

Fireworks can also frighten animals. Many domestic pets and farm animals can be scared and panicked by the noises fireworks make, and potentially harm themselves.

## FIREWORKS AND THE LAW

### When can I use Fireworks?

The Fireworks Regulations 2004 prohibit anyone under 18 from possessing fireworks, and anyone except professionals from possessing display fireworks.

These regulations also prohibit the use of fireworks at night between 11pm – 7am in England and Wales, with extensions for the following festivals:

- Until 1am on the night of the Chinese New Year
- Until 1am on the night of Diwali
- Until 1am on New Year's Eve
- Until midnight on the 5 November

These regulations are to be enforced by the police.

There is a penalty of up to £5,000 or 6 months in prison for breach of the curfew.

The Fireworks Regulations 2004 prohibit the supply of fireworks louder than 120 decibels.

## What laws cover nuisance and danger caused by fireworks?

If a local authority officer judges noise from fireworks to be a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, they can issue an abatement notice – however, as firework noise is short lived, in practice it can prove difficult to locate the source.

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 local authorities have the power to issue an anti-social behaviour order to anyone causing “harassment, alarm or distress”. Disobeying an order carries a prison sentence of up to five years.

### Fixed Penalty Notices

Throwing or setting off fireworks in the street is an offence under the Explosives Act 1875. This is enforced by the police, and a fixed penalty notice of £80 applies.

The police can enforce a fixed penalty notice to anyone under 18 possessing a firework in a public place and for breach of the 11pm curfew on letting off fireworks.

### Animals

It is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to animals under the Protection of Animals Act 1911. A penalty of up to £5000 and/or 6 months in prison is enforceable by the police, trading standards or the RSPCA.

### What is the law on the supply of fireworks?

Under the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 all fireworks for use by the public must meet British standard BS 7114.

Under these regulations the sale of fireworks to anyone under 18 is banned, and of caps, cracker snaps and party poppers to anyone under 16.

The supply of bangers, mini rockets, fireworks that fly erratically (squibs, helicopters) ariel shells and moons and mortars and some large powerful

display fireworks are banned from supply to the public.

These regulations are enforced by local authority consumer protection/trading standards officers. Suppliers/shopkeepers in breach face a fine of up to £5,000 and/or 6 months prison.

**Since January 2005 the sale of fireworks to the public is prohibited, except from licensed traders.**

**The Fireworks Regulations 2004 state that in England, Wales and Scotland fireworks can be sold by unlicensed traders for the Chinese New Year and the preceding three days, Diwali and the preceding three days and 15 October – 10 November, to allow Bonfire Night celebrations.**

### More information on fireworks:

#### Fire service

[www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/](http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/)  
[fireworkswww.fireservice.co.uk/safety/bonfires](http://fireworkswww.fireservice.co.uk/safety/bonfires)

#### UK Fireworks Safety

[www.fireworksafety.co.uk](http://www.fireworksafety.co.uk)