

Fireworks Dangers

In 2017, an Estimated 12,900 People Were Sent to the Emergency Room For Treatment of Firework-Related Injuries

Head, Face, Ears -
2,838 injuries (22%)

Eyes -
1,806 injuries (14%)



Hands & Fingers -
3,999 injuries (31%)

Arms -
774 injuries (6%)

Innocent
Bystanders
50%

Injuries By Gender



30% 70%

Trunk -
1,290 injuries (10%)

Legs -
2,193 injuries (17%)

"Our studies show that parental supervision is not enough to prevent consumer fireworks injuries to children – in fact, children who are simply bystanders and not even handling the fireworks are often injured, said Gary A. Smith, MD, DrPH, president of the Child Injury Prevention Alliance, and a pediatric emergency medicine physician at Nationwide Children's Hospital-Columbus. The words that I hear when parents bring their child crying in pain to the emergency department after a firework injury are always the same: 'Doctor, I can't believe that this happened to my child. I was standing right there, but it happened so fast that I could not do anything in time to stop it from happening'. These are good parents who simply believed the myth that these products could be used safely. Do not make that mistake with your family."

Fireworks can really make a kid's face light up.



LEGISLATION TO LEGALIZE THE DISCHARGE OF FIREWORKS IN OHIO --A PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY ISSUE POSITION PAPER

Background:

Sub. Senate Bill 72 introduced on March 5, 2019 sponsored by Ohio Senator Dave Burke (R-Marysville) and HB 253 introduced by Representatives Don Manning (R-Middletown) and Michael O'Brien (D-Warren) on May 21, 2019 would, if passed:

- * allow Ohioans to buy, possess and discharge 1.4G fireworks on their own property or others' property with permission effective 1-1-20;
- * require sellers to give safety pamphlets to buyers;
- * impose a 4 percent fee on top of sales taxes to fund firefighter training and fireworks regulation;
- * set up a 16-member Ohio fire code rule recommendation committee to make fireworks regulations recommendations to the State Fire Marshal by 9-30-19;
- * extend the a long-standing moratorium on licenses to manufacture and sell fireworks to 12-15-21; and
- * allow counties, cities and some townships to either ban fireworks or restrict the times and dates that consumers can discharge fireworks.
- * allow fountain devices (a type of 1.4G firework which contains up to 500 grams of "pyrotechnic mixture") to be sold in retail locations submitting a \$25 license fee that are approved by the state fire marshal.

Current Ohio law provides for the sale and use of trick and novelty fireworks (anything that goes snap, crackle or pop – including sparklers) that are widely available in grocery and department stores.

Current law in Ohio also allows for the sale of 1.4 G consumer fireworks (available at special fireworks stores from licensed manufacturers or wholesalers throughout the state), but requires purchasers to transport them out of state within 48 hours. These types of fireworks may not be legally discharged in Ohio. In 2016, the requirement for purchasers of 1.4G fireworks to sign a form attesting that they will take them out of state within 48 hours was removed.

Status:

SB 72 Introduced March 5, 2019 is assigned to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Commerce and Workforce which has held sponsor, proponent and opponent testimony.

HB 253 was introduced on May 21, 2019.

**Key Message for Fireworks Safety Advocates:
LEAVE FIREWORKS TO THE PROFESSIONALS**

- ✓ Backyard fireworks are dangerous to the user and to bystanders.
- ✓ We oppose any legislation that legalizes the use of backyard fireworks.
- ✓ Leave fireworks to the professionals and attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

Fireworks Injury and Property Destruction Data:*

- ✓ Since 2008, 6 additional states have legalized discharge of consumer grade fireworks and during that same period of time, serious injuries increased by 75% from 2.3 injuries per 100,000 population in 2008 to 4.0 injuries per 100,000 populations in 2017.
- ✓ Last year an estimated 12,900 people were sent to the emergency room for treatment of firework-related injuries and 4 associated deaths. An estimated 8,700 fireworks-related injuries, or 67 percent of people treated, occurred during the one-month period surrounding the Fourth of July Holiday.
- ✓ Sparklers accounted for an estimated 1,200 emergency department-treated injuries, which represents 14 percent of the total fireworks-related injuries. The population most affected by these injuries was children under the age of 5. Most sparkler injuries were to the eye.
- ✓ Nearly half of all fireworks injuries are to innocent bystanders –many of them children. Of the 12,900 fireworks-related injuries last year, 36 percent of those injuries were to children under the age of 15, or nearly 4,644 children.
- ✓ The parts of the body most often injured were hands and fingers (31 percent); head, face, and ears (22 percent); eyes (14 percent); trunk (10 percent); legs (17 percent); and arms (6 percent).
- ✓ Fireworks cause an average of 120 injuries in Ohio annually that require a visit to the emergency room. 17% are to the eyes. 25% are to those under 15 years of age. (Ohio Department of Health)
- ✓ Between 2006 and 2012, the overall estimated number of children injured by fireworks increased nationwide, while state laws related to the sale of fireworks to minors were relaxed. Burn-related injuries were suffered by an estimated 90,257 pediatric patients nationwide during the study period. The study also showed that fireworks injuries increased among younger children and hospital admissions grew from 29% to 50% of those injured and the length of stay in the hospital increased from 3 days to 7 days. (Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting, University of Louisville, May 2016).
- ✓ The National Fire Protection Agency states that almost half (47%) of the reported fires on the Fourth of July were started by fireworks. <http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fire-causes/fireworks>.
- ✓ Fireworks also cause over 17,000 fires nationwide each year and tens of millions of dollars in damage. In Ohio in 2017, fire incidents involving fireworks caused 25 structure fires, resulting in an estimated \$93,900 in property loss and \$17,701 in content loss. In total, there were 78 fire incidents involving fireworks reported for 2017, with an estimated \$109,555 in property loss and \$18,176 in content loss (Ohio State Fire Marshal's Office)
- ✓ Staff from CPSC's Office of Import Surveillance and Office of Compliance and Field Operations, in cooperation with U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"), conducts surveillance on imported shipments of consumer fireworks. With assistance from CBP, CPSC staff selectively sampled and tested shipments of imported fireworks in fiscal year 2017, for compliance with the FHSA. Approximately 31 percent of the selected and tested shipments were found to contain fireworks that were banned hazardous substances because they were noncompliant with FHSA. The majority of violations centered on violations for fuse performance requirements and overloaded report composition. (CPSC 2017)

*Data is from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission's 2017 Fireworks Annual Report, unless otherwise indicated.

Ohio Fireworks Safety Advocates Coalition

Coalition established in 1998 to educate the public about the dangers of consumer use of backyard fireworks

Akron Children's Hospital	Ohio Children's Hospital Association
American Academy of Pediatrics- Ohio Chapter	Ohio Committee on Trauma
American College of Surgeons	Ohio Department of Health
American College of Emergency Physicians-Ohio	Ohio Ophthalmological Society
AMVETS	Ohio Opticians Association
Byers, Minton & Assoc.	Ohio Public Health Association
Center for Injury Research and Policy, Nationwide	Ohio Public Health Association-Vision Section
Children's Hospital	Ohio Osteopathic Association
Central Ohio Fire Prevention Association	Ohio Safe Kids Coalition
Chargin Falls Fire Department	Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership
City of Upper Arlington	Ohio Insurance Institute
Columbus Health Dept.	Ohio Municipal League
Deaconess Associations Inc.	Ohio Society for Public Health Education
Franklin County Dog Shelter	Ohio State Medical Association
Humane Society of the United States	Ohio Township Association
Layfayette Township Fire Department	Perrysburg Township Fire Department
Lesic & Camper Communications	Prevent Blindness America
MacMurray, Petersen & Shuster LLP	Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners	Rescue Me Ohio
Mentor Fire Department	Quarter Horse Congress
National Fire Protection Agency	Truro Township Fire Department
Nationwide Children's Hospital	The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio
NEOMED – Northeast Ohio Medical University	Washington Township Fire Dept.
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians	Wood County Sherriff's Office
Ohioans Against Fireworks	Upper Arlington Fire Department

Ohio Fireworks Safety Advocates
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Questions Fireworks Safety Advocates May Be Asked:

Q: Can individuals be taught to use backyard fireworks safely? Oftentimes, when a particular act is legal (i.e. discharging fireworks), people think it's safe. That's why you see small children given sparklers which burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit – hot enough to melt gold, blind a playmate or set their clothes aflame. There is no safe way to use fireworks and no backyard fireworks are inherently safe. The instructions on the package read – “Light fuse and run in other direction.” If there was a safe way to use these explosives, there wouldn't be so many tragic accidents. We need to remember that nearly 50% of fireworks injuries are to innocent bystanders.

Q. Do you know of any incidences where a fireworks accident has caused an injury?

In June 2018, a Cleveland man was severely injured after igniting a mortar shell that exploded in his face. He was rushed to the emergency room where he was treated for burns and abrasions to his face and eyes. The patient received immediate surgery in his right eye by Dr. Thomas Steinemann at MetroHealth. During the surgery, a procedure was performed that required the use of amniotic membrane, a technique used to promote surface reconstruction and ocular healing.

On June 4, 2018 three boys in Toledo found discarded a backyard firework on a street near their homes. They attempted to light it and it “blew up”. Two of the boys suffered burns to their upper body and face. A third boy, just age 10, lost his hand.

On June 23, 2018, a suspect was jailed in Bellefontaine for illegally shooting off fireworks, including one that took an errant flight path and struck and burned an 11-year old passerby while he and his father passed the shooter's property on a walk through the neighborhood. The boy was treated for second-degree burns on his shoulder and bicep.

Q. Why did reported fireworks injuries in Indiana decrease after fireworks were legalized in 2005? The Chief Medical Officer from the Indiana State Health Department stated in a letter dated January 26, 2015 to Ohio officials, “The reported data on fireworks-related injuries from Indiana are incomplete and therefore not reliable for use in ascertaining trends in injuries. It would be erroneous to conclude that the Indiana law legalizing fireworks use resulted in a decrease in fireworks-related injuries given the vast underreporting of these injuries by medical facilities in Indiana.”

Q. As a citizen of the State of Ohio, can I buy and use fireworks? Yes, you may buy consumer or 1.4G fireworks from a licensed wholesaler or manufacturer; however, you cannot discharge any consumer or 1.4G fireworks in the State of Ohio. You must transport all fireworks purchased in Ohio out of the state within 48 hours of the purchase. The only items that can be used in Ohio are designated “trick and novelty” which smoke, pop, and/or sparkle. In Ohio, use of 1.4G fireworks (fire crackers, bottle rockets, etc.) is illegal. (ORC 3743.65 (B))

Q. What are fireworks laws in other states? According to the American Pyrotechnics Association:

- States that allow some or all types of consumer fireworks (1.4G) permitted by Federal regulations= 46 states + DC
- States that allow only wire or wood stick sparklers and other novelty items = 3 states: IL, OH, VT
- States that ban all consumer fireworks=1 states: MA
- Laws by state can be found at: <http://www.americanpyro.com/state-law-directory>

Q. Where can I find Ohio's laws that regulate fireworks? Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3743 and Ohio Fire Code (OFC) 1301:7-7-33 are the code references that govern fireworks in Ohio. These publications can be found online at <http://codes.ohio.gov/> and http://www.com.ohio.gov/documents/fire_fireworksredbook.pdf

Q. Does Ohio law require a license for the sale and use of fireworks? Yes, manufacturers, wholesalers, exhibitors and shippers of fireworks must have State Fire Marshal (SFM) issued licenses for fireworks use. Renewal for all licenses is required each year.

Q. Can I get a license to sell fireworks? Q. Can I get a license to sell fireworks? A. Not at this time. There is a moratorium on the issuance of additional fireworks manufacturers and wholesalers licenses in effect until September 15, 2018 (ORC 3743.75). The moratorium was extended through December 31, 2019 through an amendment to an unrelated bill passed in the Ohio General Assembly in May 2018. By law, the State Fire Marshal can only issue licenses on December 1st of each year. There are currently 50 retail licenses in Ohio. HB 226 calls for extension of the moratorium to January 1, 2021.

Fireworks Position Statement

Position Statement

Prevent Blindness supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks and sparklers, except those used in authorized public displays by competent licensed operators.

In order to eliminate the health and economic impact of fireworks accidents, Prevent Blindness further supports the following:

- All state governments should adopt a uniform model law that would establish standards and codes for public fireworks displays conducted under controlled conditions by trained and licensed personnel.
- The importation, general sale and indiscriminate use of all fireworks (including consumer fireworks and sparklers) by unlicensed adults and children should be banned. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission should work to ban the use of consumer fireworks and sparklers by the public.
- Federal agencies should enact and/or rigidly enforce regulations prohibiting the importation, Internet/mail order and interstate transportation of consumer fireworks and sparklers.
- Healthcare practitioners and local authorities should be required to report any fireworks or sparkler-related injuries, property damages and deaths. Injuries and incidents can be reported to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission by calling 800.638.2772 or filing a report on their website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.
- All professionals, organizations and agencies concerned with the safety of the American public should intensify educational efforts to inform adults and children of the hazards associated with the use of all types of fireworks and sparklers.

*Note: Sparklers include two classifications, based upon the type of combustible used: Certain sparklers are classified as 1.4G fireworks (often called "consumer fireworks"), while others are classified as "novelties." **Both types of sparklers burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit.** For the purposes of this paper, the term "sparklers" refers to sparklers in both classifications.*

Prevent Blindness further promotes the following message:

- Fireworks are extremely dangerous.
- There is no safe way for you or your family to use fireworks.
- Do not purchase, use or store fireworks or sparklers.
- Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks and sparklers.
- Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

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Police: Explosion that caused boy to lose hand was most likely firework

Police said it's possible the firework had been partially lit or detonated before the boys found it, but they aren't sure where it came from.



Oxford boys

OXFORD, Ohio —

The Oxford Police Department said an explosion that caused a boy to lose his hand was almost certainly a firework similar to an aerial salute.

The explosion, which took place March 19 on East Withrow Street near off-campus college housing, injured two 12-year-old boys.

One of the boys, Caleb Bogan, ended up losing his hand. The other, Brendon Jones, suffered minor injuries.

Oxford police said what happened to Caleb and Brendon might not rise to a criminal act but it is a dangerous wake-up call for everyone.

"It was devastating injuries, in my opinion, when you lose a hand, and I believe he lost fingers or parts of fingers on the other hand, but he has a great attitude, mature beyond his years," Lt. Lara Fening said.

The boys were injured when they discovered a fireworks device in an alley last month.

"Inadvertently it was left there, maybe (by) the person who had initially launched this device. We think it didn't go off," Fening said.

Bogan's father said his son has a long recovery ahead.

"It's a hard thing to go through. It's not something someone is going to get over quickly. He is recovering (and) he is showing signs of improvement," Danny Knapp said.

Fening said the police theory is it was a two-part firework, in which one part did light -- pushing it up into the air. But the other part, which would have exploded up in the air, didn't. She said that was the piece found by the children.

"This has sparked a lot of parents to talk to their kids about not taking a chance," Fening said.

Fireworks Nearly Cost Firefighter His Sight

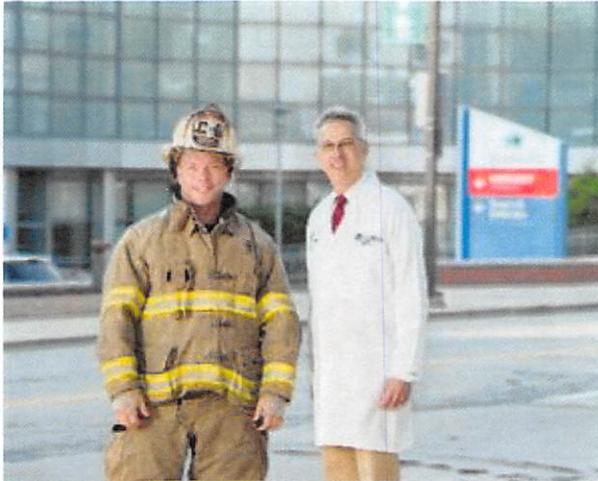


Firefighter Jay Northup is thankful to ophthalmologist Thomas Steinemann, MD, for helping to save his vision after a fireworks injury.

Written By: Jennifer Churchill

Reviewed By: [Dianna L Seldomridge, MD, MBA](#), [Natasha L Herz MD](#), [Thomas L Steinemann MD](#)

Jun. 18, 2018



Every year, about 10,000 people are rushed to the emergency department for fireworks injuries. Fire Captain Jay Northup never thought he would be counted among them. He took all the right precautions as he organized his backyard Fourth of July fireworks celebration. But a split second of poor judgement nearly cost him his vision and his life.

A 23-year veteran of the Euclid Fire Department in Euclid, Ohio, he had the training and experience to safely execute a pyrotechnic display to impress family and friends. And it wasn't the first time Northup, 47, had organized the neighborhood fireworks display.

He had strategically placed the launch pad behind his garage, where he set up a 12-shot box of mortars that, when lit, would shoot a couple hundred feet into the air. The kids, including his 15-year-old twins, and adults were at the front of the house, safely away from the launch pad.

Alone in the backyard, he started lighting up \$600 worth of fireworks. The first three mortars went off as intended, but then, silence. After about 10 minutes, he decided to investigate the dud. His face was about 12 inches above the cylinder, when the dud suddenly exploded. The blast threw him to the ground, leaving him completely disoriented and unable to see.

"It felt like something was pouring out of my right eye, and I just had no idea what was going on," Northup said. "I thought I was dying."

His wife, an ER nurse, managed to stay calm as she rushed her bleeding husband the 12 miles from their home to Metro Health in Cleveland, where doctors immediately began treating his life-threatening injuries.

The impact from the explosion caused a subdural hematoma, one of the deadliest of all head injuries. Once doctors controlled the bleeding and pressure in his brain, they turned to the cuts on his forehead that required 35 stitches to close. His face was also burned and bruised.

"I thought I was dying." - Jay Northup, firefighter

After Northup was stable, it was up to ophthalmologist Thomas Steinemann, MD, to save his sight. His right eye took a direct hit from the mortar, burning off his eyelashes and the skin around his eye. The impact deformed the front part of his eye, damaging the [cornea](#) and sending shockwaves to the back of his eye, bruising the [retina](#). Blood had

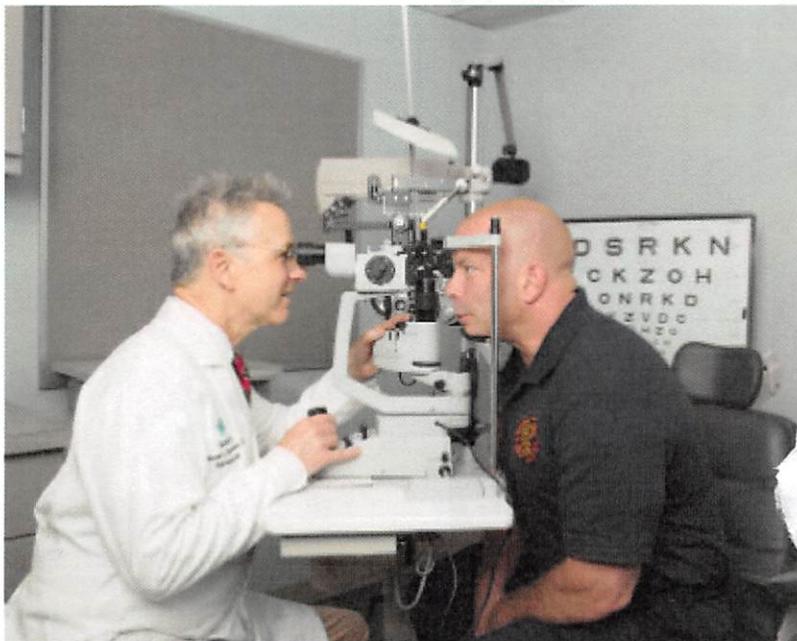
begun to pool inside his eye, a dangerous condition that increases pressure inside the eye and can lead to blindness.

Dr. Steinemann treated him with special eyedrops to control the inflammation in his eye, and antibiotic eyedrops and ointment to prevent infection. In about a week, Northup's vision began to improve, but Dr. Steinemann could already detect trouble ahead. A [traumatic cataract](#) was beginning to form. Like a typical cataract caused by aging, a traumatic cataract happens when the lens of the eye begins to get cloudy and must be surgically removed to restore normal vision. It's a common condition following a traumatic injury to the eye.

About 10 months after the fireworks injury, Dr. Steinemann performed cataract surgery on his right eye, restoring Northup's sight once again. While Northup made a full recovery and returned to work as a firefighter, he was left with a lasting defect. His pupil is paralyzed; it can no longer expand and contract to accommodate lighting conditions.

The pupil is like a camera, it opens to a larger setting when indoors to let the light in and to a smaller setting outdoors to keep the light out. Dr. Steinemann explained that Northup's "camera" is permanently stuck on the indoor setting, making it painful to be outside without sunglasses.

ER Visits Explode on the 4th



Thomas Steinemann, MD, examines firefighter Jay Northup's eyes to monitor his vision and his recovery as he continues to heal from the fireworks explosion that almost blinded him.

Ophthalmologists have reason to fear the Fourth of July. According to the latest U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [data](#) (PDF, 648KB), fireworks caused approximately 10,000 visits to the emergency department in 2016, about 9,000 of which were for eye injuries. Injuries range from cuts and bruises to damaged corneas, retinas and ruptured eyeballs.

"Even those little, innocent-looking sparklers people give children burn at 2,000 degrees." - Dr. Steinemann

Mortars like those Northup purchased aren't the main culprit. Most injuries are caused by legal fireworks parents buy for their children, such as sparklers, firecrackers, bottle rockets, and Roman candles.

"As ophthalmologists, we see so many preventable eye injuries, in adults and children" said Dr. Steinemann. "Even those little, innocent-looking sparklers people give children burn at 2,000 degrees."

The [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#) advises that the safest way to view fireworks is to watch a professional show. For those who choose to set off fireworks, the Academy recommends wearing protective eyewear and keeping a hose and buckets of water on hand for duds and misfires. Soak the dud from a distance with a hose or a bucket of water. Pick it up with a shovel and fully submerge it in a bucket of water to ensure it's safe for disposal.

After Recovery, Advocacy



Firefighter Jay Northup just a few hours after the explosion and being admitted to the Level 1 Trauma Center at Metro Health in Cleveland.

It took time for Northup to recover from his physical and emotional injuries. "One split second of a very bad decision almost cost me my life," Northup said.

"I think fireworks can be safe, but they're also unpredictable, and I have a totally different outlook now." - Jay Northup

Did he take some razzing at the firehouse? Yes, but it's how firefighters cope with a stressful job. He no longer cares about bringing attention to his mistake. He is on a mission to make sure no one else becomes a statistic.

"I think fireworks can be safe, but they're also unpredictable, and I have a totally different outlook now," Northup said. "My advice for celebrating the Fourth of July? Leave the fireworks to the professionals or, better yet, just go have a nice family picnic."

The Columbus Dispatch

Editorial: Keep Ohio children safe by rejecting bill to legalize fireworks

May 17, 2019

One of the saddest sights anywhere is of a child seriously injured, often permanently, by the foolish act of an adult.

The nation's children's hospitals overflow with such cases, which could be reduced significantly if only public policies put the health of children first. One of these policies is the regulation of consumer grade fireworks — bottle rockets, skyrockets, flares, Roman candles and the like.

Last year, an estimated 12,900 people were sent to emergency rooms for treatment of injuries caused by such fireworks. Nearly half of fireworks injuries are to innocent bystanders; more than a third of injuries are to children under the age of 15.

Compared with the nation, Ohio's fireworks disaster rate is low. In Ohio, fireworks cause an average of 120 injuries requiring a visit to an emergency room annually. One-fourth of those injuries are to children. Ohio's relative advantage is due to its longstanding prohibition on the discharge of consumer grade fireworks within the state.

While it's true Ohioans rarely are prosecuted for illegally discharging fireworks, the existence of the law clearly serves a beneficial purpose. It deters. It prevents severe injuries to the innocent, especially children.

Which is why it's distressing that in each and every session of the Ohio General Assembly some lawmaker introduces legislation to repeal Ohio's ban on the discharge of consumer grade fireworks.

The latest effort is by state Sen. Dave Burke, R-Marysville, an otherwise sensible legislator and licensed pharmacist. Burke said he is "disappointed each and every year when I cannot legally and honestly discharge fireworks as a means of celebrating with my family, friends and neighbors."

While Burke may be disappointed, few of his fellow Ohioans are. Although legislation like Burke's has been introduced session after session, rank-and-file Ohioans have never shown up to voice support.

The plain truth is the only real support for Burke's Senate Bill 72 and its predecessors comes from the fireworks industry itself. It's all about sales and market share.

In recent years, the industry has been successful in getting many states to liberalize their laws on fireworks. So successful that Ohio now stands among a small handful of states to still prohibit consumer discharge. This stand is something to be proud of, not to repeal.

At a time when Gov. Mike DeWine and state lawmakers have begun broad-based efforts to improve Ohio's commitment to children's health, the fireworks bill runs diametrically in the other direction.

National studies consistently have shown that as states legalize discharge of fireworks, the frequency and severity of injuries increase. Since 2008, six states have legalized discharge of consumer grade fireworks. In the years since, serious injuries increased by 75%, from 2.3 injuries to 4 injuries per 100,000 population, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Consumer grade fireworks contain up to 500 milligrams of gunpowder. The Ohio State Fire Officials Association says there is no safe way to use them.

State lawmakers should listen to those on the front lines of protecting Ohioans' health, especially children's health. The Ohio Fireworks Safety Coalition is composed of nearly 50 groups, including all of the state's leading medical, health and insurance organizations.

Before any lawmaker decides to vote for this ill-advised legislation, The Dispatch respectfully encourages a visit to one of Ohio's children's hospitals and a conversation with pediatric specialists who have treated far too many innocent victims of adult foolishness.

The Columbus Dispatch

Letter: Backyard fireworks pose dangerous threat

May 21, 2019

I thank The Dispatch for its Friday editorial “**Keep Ohio children safe by rejecting bill to legalize fireworks.**” Ohio Senate Bill 72 seeks to allow essentially an “anytime, anyplace” condition for high-grade backyard fireworks discharge in Ohio.

Should this bill become law, there will be an increase in fireworks-related injuries to children and adults. In addition to emergency medical and health groups, the broad coalition that is opposed to the expansion of backyard fireworks also includes the concerns of military veterans and animal protection.

Liberalized fireworks laws that allow the unpredictable “anytime and anyplace” approach to backyard fireworks can be seriously stressful for veterans dealing with PTSD. On July 4, some veterans even place signs asking neighbors to be courteous when it comes to blasting off fireworks.

Fireworks also cause our animal shelters to fill up over the Independence Day holiday.

Community-based professional fireworks shows are something many people can plan for and enjoy. Dealing with neighbors who blast away at random times is something most people do not enjoy.

Jenny Camper, board member, Prevent Blindness Ohio, Columbus