



# Bexar County Fire Marshal

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San Antonio, Texas 78207

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 30, 2014**

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## Fireworks safety for New Year's Eve

While there are no restrictions or bans on the sale or use of fireworks in unincorporated areas of Bexar County, Fire Marshal Craig Roberts is asking residents to follow simple safety guidelines when it comes to the personal use of fireworks.

It is illegal to discharge fireworks within 600 feet of a hospital, sanitarium, veterinary hospital, school or church; and within 100 feet of a gas station; and to discharge fireworks at or from a motor vehicle.

Even in the best weather conditions there is still a danger associated with the use of fireworks. Users should follow these tips to avoid causing damage to their property or the property of others:

- Select an area free of dry grasses and other dead vegetation.
- Keep a bucket of water or a water hose nearby.
- Do not use fireworks when the weather forecast calls for winds above 10 mph.

Beyond the danger of starting a fire, residents also should consider their personal safety as well as the safety of others when using fireworks by following these tips:

- Always read and follow manufacturer's recommendations and instructions.
- Have an adult present and never give fireworks to children.
- Only use fireworks outdoors.
- Always have plenty of water available to extinguish a fire should one start.
- Never experiment or make your own fireworks. Make sure you only use fireworks purchased from a licensed seller.
- Light only one firework at a time.
- Never re-light a "dud" firework. If a firework does not work properly, wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water and dispose of it properly.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.

- Never throw or point fireworks at other people.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Do not shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.
- Wear eye protection and never have any part of the body over the firework.

Although there is some light rain forecasted for Bexar County over the New Year's holiday, unincorporated Bexar County is still under a burn ban. While the use of fireworks is legal, the ban on outdoor burning will be strictly enforced by the Fire Marshal's Office on New Year's Eve. Outdoor fires will be allowed only when the fire is fully contained to a metal barrel or concrete/rock fire pit and both must have a fine mesh metal screen covering the top. Any other outdoor fire will not be permitted. A violation of the burn ban is a Class C misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.

The fireworks hotline will be activated at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31, through 6 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 1. Residents who live in unincorporated Bexar County can call (210) 335-FIRE (3473) to report the unsafe or illegal use of fireworks. If an actual medical or fire emergency results from the use of fireworks, residents should instead call 911.

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