Firework safety checklist

A little preparation. A safer celebration.

BEFORE THE DISPLAY

- ☐ Buy from a licensed retailer. Choose fireworks that meet current safety standards; check for the CE or UKCA mark.
- ☐ Read and follow the instructions on every firework before use.
- ☐ Choose products that fit your space: F2 requires at least 8m (although some manufacturers recommend more, so check the label); F3 requires at least 25m. Safety distances are important, so follow them.
- ☐ Choose a suitable area for firing; it should be firm, level ground. Secure each product exactly as instructed. Also plan a clear route for you to follow after lighting the firework.
- ☐ Tell your neighbours the time and duration of your display, especially older people and families with young children or sensitive pets. Prepare your own pets, and make sure they are indoors.
- ☐ Avoid late-night displays, especially on school nights. Check local rules and permitted firing times (Scotland has its own permitted times).

WHEN YOU LIGHT

- ☐ Have one designated responsible adult in charge. Keep all spectators in the viewing area, maintaining the minimum safety distance.
- ☐ Keep unused fireworks in a closed box away from the firing area. Take out one at a time and close the box again.
- ☐ Light one firework at a time, at the end of the fuse and at arm's length. Never stand or lean over it. Step back immediately. Do not return to a lit firework. If the firework does not fire properly, and the manufacturer’s instructions state it has a reserve fuse, follow the instructions and the waiting time before lighting the reserve fuse.
- ☐ Never throw fireworks or put them in pockets.
- ☐ Stand well back from bonfires: wind-blown embers can injure eyes.

SPARKLERS

- ☐ Do NOT give sparklers to anyone under five years old. Supervise older children at all times. Light sparklers one at a time and wear suitable gloves, including when lighting them.
- ☐ Place spent sparklers flat, fully submerged in a bucket or preferably a metal tray of cold water, away from children.

MISFIRES AND CLEARING UP

- ☐ If a firework fails to light, or stops unexpectedly, keep everyone away from the firework and do not attempt to relight it, unless the manufacturer’s instructions specifically describe using a supplied reserve fuse. Follow that procedure exactly. If unsure, leave the firework and contact the retailer.
- ☐ For a permitted supplied reserve fuse, wait at least 15 minutes and any longer time on the label; follow the full instructions. Never relight the original fuse or attempt a repair.
- ☐ Let spent fireworks and debris cool completely overnight, then soak in water the following morning and follow product and local disposal advice. Keep failed or partly fired items separate and ask the retailer for guidance.
- ☐ Never put spent fireworks on a bonfire.