



Douglass Township, Montgomery County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2018

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP FIREWORKS SAFETY

The Douglass Township Board of Supervisors wishes to extend a safe and happy Independence Day holiday. In an effort to insure the safety of our residents, businesses and visitors in our municipal borders, we would ask that you obey House Bill No. 542 of 2017, or Act 43 of 2017 as it pertains to fireworks.

House Bill 542 was signed into law on October 30, 2017. Under the new law, the Fireworks Act of 1939 was repealed and replaced in its entirety. Consumers can now purchase and use "Class C" or "consumer-grade" fireworks that include firecrackers, Roman Candles, bottle rockets, and similar fireworks that contain a maximum of 50 milligrams of explosive material. The expansion includes those fireworks that were previously only available to out-of-state residents. Professional-grade aerial shells containing more than 60 grams of pyrotechnic compositions, are still only to be used by professionals with a permit from the municipality.

Fireworks cannot be ignited or discharged on a public or private property without express permission of the property owner. Fireworks cannot be discharged from or within a motor vehicle or building. Fireworks cannot be discharged toward a motor vehicle or building. Fireworks cannot be discharged within **150 feet of an occupied structure**. Fireworks cannot be discharged while a person is under the influence of alcohol, a controlled substance, or another drug.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, fireworks caused an estimated 15,600 reported fires in the United States in calendar year 2013. This included 1,400 structure fires, 200 vehicle fires, and 14,000 outside and other fires. More than 28% of those fires were reported on Independence Day. Additionally, the Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that more than one-third (35%) of the people seen in emergency rooms for fireworks injuries from June 20-July 20, 2014 were under 15; nine percent were under five.

For further information on House Bill 542, please visit the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture website: http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Business_Industry/fireworks/Documents