



News Release, For Immediate Distribution

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Protect Your Eyes and Attend Professional Firework Displays

PORTLAND, OR, June 30, 2008 — This year for the 4th of July celebrations, the *Oregon Optometric Physicians Association suggests Oregonians stay away from private firework use and instead enjoy professional displays to protect and preserve eyesight.

Each year over the holiday, thousands of adults and children are seriously injured as a result of fireworks and pyrotechnic devices. Many burns and injuries affect eyesight, permanently damaging and in some cases blinding the victims.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), during the 2005 calendar year (the most recent year statistics were available), fireworks were involved in an estimated 10,800 injuries that were treated in U. S. hospital emergency departments. The CPSC reports approximately 1,600 cases were eye injuries. Most of these eye injuries were contusions and lacerations.

Believe it or not, sparklers are the highest cause of fireworks injuries requiring trips to the emergency room. Sparklers can easily burn children since they heat up to 1800 degrees, hot enough to melt gold.

And, surprising to many, bystanders are not safe from injury. Data from the United States Eye Injury Registry shows that bystanders are injured by fireworks one-half of the time.

About two-thirds of the fireworks-related injuries were burns, and most of the burns involved the hands, **eyes** and head/face. Forty-five percent of the victims were under 15 years old, and twice as many males were injured as females.

That's why the OOPA encourages Oregonians to be safe and protect their eyes this 4th of July. Go to professional displays where you can enjoy the spectacle in the sky.

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**The OOPA obtained content for this news release from the American Optometric Association, its parent organization.*

About the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association

The Oregon Optometric Physicians Association is a statewide organization comprised of Doctors of Optometry, college of optometry faculty, optometric students and industry-related associates. It advocates advancing the quality, availability and accessibility of eye, vision and related health care. It also works to represent the profession of optometry, to enhance and promote the independent and ethical decision making of its members, and to assist optometric physicians in practicing the highest standards of patient care. Based in Milwaukie, Oregon, the OOPA has nearly 400 members. For more information, visit www.oregonoptometry.org.

About the American Optometric Association (AOA)

The American Optometric Association represents more than 34,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians. AOA doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors on the frontline of eye and vision care who examine, diagnose,



treat and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in a patient's overall health and well-being by detecting systemic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Doctors of optometry have the skills and training to provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. For more information, visit www.aoa.org.