

Fireworks in shops: Retailers' risk assessment checklist

This checklist accompanies the leaflet *Storing and selling fireworks safely* INDG407, which is available online at: <http://www/hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg407.pdf>. It has been written for people who sell fireworks, to help them carry out a risk assessment and plan what actions they need to take to protect the safety of staff and customers.

How could a fire start?				
Danger	Action	Your actions and notes (record here any specific actions you need to take)	Action taken (✓)	Comments
Cigarettes and other naked lights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restrict access to store area where fireworks are stored. ■ Ensure fireworks are not left unattended in the warehouse. ■ Prohibit smoking anywhere near the items. ■ Keep in a locked cabinet or display cabinet. 	(eg 'ensure all staff are aware of no smoking areas and check <i>no smoking</i> signs are displayed in prominent locations)		Taking positive action to prevent a fire is the most important of all the control measures you must take.
Sparks from electrical sockets and fittings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disconnect from electrical supply if fitted in display cabinets or use dummy fireworks. ■ In storerooms, remove electrical equipment (other than light fittings and fire detection equipment) and blank off plugs. 			

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Heat causing boxes to catch fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remove space heaters or position them well away from the fireworks. ■ In storerooms, leave a clear space between the light fitting(s) and the fireworks. 			
Fire involving other goods spreads to the fireworks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep in a dedicated storeroom if possible, otherwise in a fire-resistant store cupboard or cabinet or container. ■ Keep well away from flammable or combustible articles. 			Flammable substances include white spirit and solvent-based paints. Video tapes and tights/stockings are also highly flammable. Combustible articles include cardboard, paper and wood (eg pallets).
Arson or criminal action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep in a secure goods yard. ■ Keep under supervision. ■ Review location of the store and security arrangements. 			A fire might be started deliberately or by thieves using cutting equipment to gain access to the store.
How could a fire spread and get worse?				
Heat from burning fireworks causes nearby flammable or combustible articles to catch fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remove the flammable/ combustible articles if possible. ■ Locate fireworks well away from flammable substances to reduce risk of fire spreading. ■ If fireworks are stored in a container outside the building ensure it is located well away from parked vehicles, pallets etc. 			

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<p>Burning fireworks or fragments are thrown into flammable or combustible articles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep the fireworks in their transport boxes. ■ Close transport boxes after use. ■ Keep fireworks in a separate storeroom. If this is not possible, keep in fire-resistant cupboards or cabinets. ■ If fireworks are stocked in a warehouse, ensure there is a barrier between fireworks and flammable items (eg a wall, or a wire screen) or enclose items in a wire cage or keep them in an ISO transport container or other suitable construction that will contain the fragment throw. ■ Control the amount of fireworks in the shop area. ■ Ensure the premises are suitable for the quantity of fireworks (and keep the stocks of fireworks within the limits permitted by your registration or licence). 			<p>Anyone storing large quantities of flammable substances should seek specialist advice.</p>
<p>Fireworks are contaminated by other chemicals or by water and become unstable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep away from caustic substances such as drain cleaners, paint strippers and wood preservatives. ■ Keep away from fertilisers and products containing peroxides (eg fibreglass hardeners). ■ Keep in a dry place. 			

How could people be harmed if there was a fire?

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<p>Staff or customers are unable to escape because of heat and/or smoke.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep all fireworks in a display or storage cabinet. ■ Ensure the fireworks are located so that escape routes are not affected by smoke and flames in the event of a fire. ■ Ensure escape routes are not blocked by other goods. ■ Ensure all staff are clear what action must be taken if there is a fire. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priority must be for staff and customers to evacuate the shop. ■ Fires should only be fought if people are in danger. ■ You have a legal duty under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 to ensure that any person present in your shop can escape to safety should there be an outbreak of fire.
<p>Fire spreads to neighbouring or adjoining residential premises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate containers away from neighbouring houses. ■ If there are flats or residential accommodation in the same building, ensure that there is a separate escape route for residents. ■ Install fire detection and alarm system. ■ Ensure that suitable fire doors are fitted etc. 			