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News Release

June 24, 2025

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Panhandle Public Health District Urges Firework Safety This Fourth of July

As Independence Day approaches, the Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) reminds residents that fireworks, while festive, can pose serious safety risks. Summer celebrations often include barbecues, parades, and fireworks—but it's important to remember that fireworks are not toys and can lead to injuries, fires, or even fatalities if not used properly.

“Fourth of July is a time to celebrate our independence with family and friends,” says Nathan Flowers, City of Gering Fire Chief. “This year we remind you to stay safe and have fun. Too often we become careless and have accidents, causing fires to damage homes and fields and cause injuries to our loved ones. PPHD has provided some great tips on ways to have a successful celebration.”

According to the National Safety Council, thousands of people—many of them children and teens—are injured each year while using consumer fireworks. The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend public displays conducted by licensed professionals.

If you choose to use consumer fireworks, PPHD and the National Safety Council encourage you to take the following precautions:

- Choose a clear, open location away from buildings, dry grass, and flammable materials.
- Designate a safety perimeter and keep spectators a safe distance away.
- Monitor weather conditions—wind can carry sparks and embers to unintended areas.
- Keep fireworks out of the hands of young children. Older children should only use fireworks under direct adult supervision.
- Avoid using fireworks while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Do not drive impaired to or from fireworks events.
- Always wear protective eyewear when lighting or near fireworks.
- Never light fireworks in your hand or indoors.
- Only ignite one firework at a time, and step away quickly.
- Never point or throw fireworks at people, animals, or vehicles.
- Avoid illegal fireworks, and check local laws and regulations before purchasing or using.
- Apply sunscreen and stay hydrated when celebrating outdoors.

PPHD encourages everyone to make safety a top priority this July 4th so we can all celebrate with joy—not regret.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit the website or call Nicole Berosek at 308-279-3496. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District and specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.

Sources: <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/summer/fireworks>;

<https://www.safewise.com/blog/fireworks-safety-guide/>; National Safety Council – www.nsc.org