

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. 			

Danger	Action	Your actions and notes (record here any specific actions you need to take)	Action taken (✓)	Comments
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. 			

Danger	Action	Your actions and notes (record here any specific actions you need to take)	Action taken (✓)	Comments
<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?

Danger	Action	Your actions and notes (record here any specific actions you need to take)	Action taken (✓)	Comments
Staff or customers are unable to escape because of heat and/or smoke.	<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.
Fire spreads to neighbouring or adjoining residential premises.	<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. 			