



211 West Wacker Drive
Suite 1700
Chicago, Illinois 60606

toll free 800.331.2020
local 312.363.6001
fax 312.363.6052

preventblindness.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:
Prevent Blindness America
Sarah Hecker
(312) 363-6035

Spend the Fourth of July with Friends and Family This Year, Not in the Emergency Room

Prevent Blindness America Urges the Public to Celebrate Safely, Leave Fireworks to the Professionals

CHICAGO (June 21, 2011) – Nearly 6,000 Americans spent part of their Fourth of July holiday in the emergency room in 2009 due to fireworks injuries, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Of those, fireworks caused an estimated 1,600 eye injuries. The injuries included contusions, lacerations and foreign bodies in the eye. Some injuries even caused permanent vision loss.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, “safe and sane” fireworks cause more injuries than illegal fireworks, especially to preschool children. For children under the age of 5, half of the total injuries were from sparklers. Children ages 15 and younger make up a significant number of fireworks injuries, accounting for 39 percent.

Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest eye health and safety organization, supports the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks and sparklers, except for authorized public displays by competent licensed operators. The non-profit group believes it is the only effective means of eliminating the social and economic impact of fireworks-related trauma and damage.

“We encourage everyone to enjoy the Fourth of July holiday this year without using consumer fireworks,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Whether you’re attending community events, family picnics or public displays by fireworks professionals, we wish you and your family a safe Independence Day.”

Prevent Blindness America offers the [“Safe Summer Celebrations”](#) brochure free to parents. The brochure offers creative tips on celebrating safely for kids and adults. Suggestions include everything from face-painting, to making patriotic

desserts, to creating glow-in-the-dark t-shirts and hats with special paints and markers.

In case of an eye-related accident, Prevent Blindness America also offers its "[First Aid for Eye Emergencies](#)" sticker in both English and Spanish, free to the public, and recommends the following should an eye injury occur:

If there are specks in the eye,

- DO NOT rub the eye.
- Use an eye wash or let tears wash out specks or particles;
- Lift the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid;
- If the speck doesn't wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage and see a doctor or go to the emergency room.

If the eye or eyelid is cut or punctured,

- DO NOT wash out the eye with water.
- DO NOT try to remove an object stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield without pressure. The bottom half of a paper cup may be used. See a doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

For more information on fireworks safety, or to request a free copy of the Safe Summer Celebrations brochure or the First Aid for Eye Emergencies sticker, call (800) 331-2020 or log on to preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

###