



CHURCH ACTIVITIES & OUTREACH

Bonfire & Firework Displays

If you are organising an event for more than 250 people you are requested to contact your Church Insurer in advance of the event.

Poorly planned and executed firework displays have resulted in serious injury in the past. If there is any doubt as to the safety of an event then it is advisable to either not run the event, or consider seeking professional assistance.

Remember that you may be personally liable in civil or criminal law if there is an accident.

If you are organising a public fireworks display please consider the guidance below:

Before the event:

- Think about who will operate the display. Remember that certain types of firework may only be used by professional firework display operators. In untrained hands these fireworks can be lethal.
- If the display is to be provided by a professional firework display operator make sure that you are clear on who does what especially in the event of an emergency.
- Consider whether the site is suitable and large enough for your display, including a bonfire if you are having one. Is there space for the fireworks to land well away from spectators? Remember to check in daylight for overhead power lines and other obstructions. What is the direction of the prevailing wind? What would happen if it changed?
- Plan and mark out the areas for spectators, firing fireworks (and a safety zone around it) as well as in areas where the fireworks will fall.
- Think about how people will get into and out of the site. Keep pedestrian and vehicle routes apart if possible. Mark exit routes clearly and ensure they are well lit. Ensure emergency vehicles can get access to the site.
- Appoint enough stewards/marshals. Make sure they understand what they are to do on the night and what they should do in the event of an emergency.
- Signpost the first aid facilities.
- Think about what you would do if things go wrong. Make sure there is someone who will be responsible for calling the emergency services.
- Contact the emergency services and local authority. If your site is near an airport you may need to contact them.
- Ensure you have a suitable place to store the fireworks. Your fireworks supplier or local authority should be able to advise.
- If you plan on selling alcohol the bar should be well away from the display site.



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On the day of the event:

- Recheck the site, weather conditions and wind direction
- Don't let anyone into the zone where the fireworks will fall and anyone other than the display operator or firing team into the firing zone or the safety zone around it.
- Discourage spectators from bringing alcohol onto the site
- Don't let spectators bring their own fireworks onto the site.
- Never attempt to relight fireworks. Keep well clear of fireworks that have failed to go off.
- If you have a bonfire at the display then you should:
 - check the structure is sound and does not have small children or animals inside it before lighting it
 - never use petrol or paraffin to light the fire
 - have only one person responsible for lighting the fire. That person, and any helpers, should wear suitable clothing eg a substantial outer garment made of wool or other low-flammable material
 - make sure that the person lighting the fire and any helpers know what to do in the event of a burn injury or clothing catching fire

The morning after:

- Carefully check and clear the site. Dispose of fireworks safely. They should never be burnt in a confined space (eg a boiler).

For more information on 'firework safety and the law' click on the link below

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm>