Safe and sane

Hutch, Reno County better off with 'safe and sane' fireworks policy

Posted: Tuesday, July 1, 2014 10:57 am

8 Share
0 Tweet
0 +1
0 Share

Fireworks regulations

It is illegal to discharge fireworks on public property: roads, streets (public roadway), parks, within 1,000 feet of hospitals or nursing homes or within 100 feet of retail firework stands or facilities where fireworks are stored. Bottle rockets are not allowed in any of the following areas.

- Reno County – The sale, use or discharge of any fireworks that emit a shower of sparks more than 6 feet in any direction is prohibited. Fireworks can be sold and discharged in the unincorporated areas of Reno County from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Sterling – Fireworks can be sold and discharged from 8 a.m. to midnight Thursday and Friday. Any fireworks approved by the state fire marshal can be discharged within the city limits.
- South Hutchinson – Fireworks can be sold and discharged from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday. Aerial fireworks are allowed.
- Haven – Aerial fireworks are allowed. Discharge and sale of fireworks are permitted during these hours: 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday; 9 a.m. to midnight Thursday and Friday.
- Nickerson – Aerial fireworks will be allowed. Fireworks will be sold from 8 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday. The discharge of fireworks will be allowed the following times: 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to midnight Friday.
- Inman – Fireworks can be discharged between 9 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Fireworks can be sold between 8 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. through Saturday. Aerial fireworks are allowed.
- Dodge City – The discharge of fireworks is allowed only on Friday and Saturday this year, from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. The fine for a violation of the ordinance is $50 and possible court costs of $140.50. Aerial fireworks are allowed.
- McPherson – Fireworks can be sold and discharged Wednesday and Thursday between 10 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. On Friday, fireworks can be sold and discharged between 10 a.m. and midnight. Aerial fireworks are allowed.
- Lyons – Fireworks can be sold Tuesday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. They can only be discharged Friday between 8 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. Aerial fireworks are allowed, with the exception of Chinese lanterns and bottle rockets.

Safety tips

A fireworks safety brochure is given with each purchase at a fireworks stand, according to South Hutchinson Fire Chief Mike Patterson. In case you aren't going to fireworks stands this year, here are some tips to help you and your family keep safe during this Fourth of July.

- Always read and follow label instructions.
- Always purchase "safe and sane" fireworks from a reliable, legitimate source.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Have a "designated shooter."
- Never give fireworks to small children.
- Adults should always supervise use of fireworks by older children.
- Always wear eye protection when lighting fireworks.
- Never ignite fireworks indoors. Make sure your outdoor area is safe for fireworks use.
- Never point or throw fireworks at a person, building or animal.
- Have a source of water handy, in case of fire.
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.
- Light only one firework at a time.
- Never attempt to re-light malfunctioning fireworks.

Posted on Jul 1, 2014
by John Montgomery

The Fourth of July holiday weekend should be "safe and sane" in Hutchinson, provided everyone follows the rules on fireworks.

"Safe and sane" is what the city calls its fireworks ordinance, which provides for the sale and discharge only of fireworks that shoot sparks no more than six feet. Fireworks that meet the restriction may be used in the city and unincorporated areas of Reno County from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. this week through Friday.

Give credit to the City Council and County Commission for striking a reasonable balance between safety and pyromania. Every year, fireworks enthusiasts complain about any restrictions, and it takes some backbone to adhere to a safe policy. Just Monday, the Hays City Commission buckled to pressure and allowed fireworks this year after a two-year ban because of the drought conditions.

Often, objectors to fireworks restrictions raise freedom arguments. What they ignore is the freedom everyone else should enjoy to peace and safety during the July Fourth holiday period.

Two years ago in Hutchinson, an unbridled fireworks culture culminated in 30 grass fires and a blaze that destroyed a home in Hutchinson. That's when the city decided fireworks had gone too far. The county went along.

By contrast, last year just one small grass fire possibly attributed to fireworks was about the extent of the mishaps. Complaints were relatively few compared to past years.

The only disappointment has been that south of the river everything still goes. Maybe just to be contrarian, or for the robust revenue from the six fireworks vendors operating in the 'burb, the city of South Hutchinson has resisted "safe and sane." This allows people to buy aerial fireworks and bring them back within the Hutchinson city limits for discharge.

Contrary to a Hutchinson News poll that suggests that "safe and sane" has put a damper on the celebration, Hutchinson and Reno County are better for their sensible fireworks regulation. And thanks to the city and business sponsors, a fantastic professional fireworks show over the state fairgrounds – as good a show as one will see anywhere – is on tap again. Hutch residents should be encouraged to enjoy it and enjoy the smaller recreational fireworks at home.

- Never attempt to re-light malfunctioning fireworks.
- When lighting fireworks, never position any part of your body over them.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Never experiment with homemade fireworks. They are dangerous and illegal.
- Never alter, modify, combine or tape together fireworks.
- Bottle rockets and other skyrockets that are mounted to a stick or wire are illegal.
- It is illegal to shoot fireworks on or under a vehicle, on any public roadway, and within 100 feet of a fireworks stand, where fireworks are stored, gas stations or anywhere liquid gas – including propane – is stored.
- Never try to light wet or damaged fireworks.
- Never light fireworks in dry grass.