

# Be safe with Fireworks

As Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service gears up for one of their busiest nights of the year they are urging the public to heed key fire safety messages to make sure this year's Guy Fawkes celebrations stay safe.

The Service has been working closely with partners including Lothian and Borders Police and Councils to deliver fire safety advice and discourage unsupervised bonfires which can be a risk to the public and greatly increase the number of calls to the fire service at this time of year.

Community Safety Manager for the Service, David Lockhart, said: "This is always an exceptionally busy time of year for us although in recent years we have seen a reduction in calls which is good news. This has been linked to the vital community safety and prevention work carried out by fire crews and partner organisations leading up to bonfire night, with a helping hand from the wet weather which kept the number of fires down.

"In a bid to continue this trend we've been delivering fire safety information and advice to schoolchildren, shops selling fireworks and to the public to highlight the dangers associated with fireworks and unsupervised bonfires."

Every year, hundreds of people in the UK are injured by fires and fireworks.

David continued: "People can be seriously hurt by misusing fireworks which are very similar to explosives. Those most at risk are unsupervised children, particularly those who play with fire or who get too close to bonfires. At this time of year the Fire and Rescue Service is regularly called out to extinguish uncontrolled or badly sited bonfires, putting pressure on resources immediately available for more serious incidents, including house fires and road traffic accidents,

where our life saving equipment is really needed.

“The lead up to Guy Fawkes Night is our busiest period and along with the Police, Councils and others we will continue to work together to reduce the number of incidents and accidents we are called out to.

“We want everyone to enjoy this time of year but stay safe and stick to supervised bonfires and firework displays”

## **Stay safe:**

Bonfires should be set up at least 18 metres from any building, and must be no taller than 2.5 metres.

Burning rubber, plastics, and painted surfaces – materials found in many bonfires – produces poisonous smoke that blows into neighbouring properties and across roads. In addition, piles of rubbish or waste are often used as a refuge by animals so, when lit, wildlife can be injured or killed.

## **Firework code**

- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114
- Keep fireworks in a closed box
- Follow the instructions on each firework
- Light them at arm's length using a taper
- Stand well back
- Always supervise children around fireworks
- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves
- Keep pets indoors
- Don't drink alcohol if setting off fireworks
- Never go near a lit firework. Even if it has gone off it could still explode
- Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them
- Never give sparklers to children under five
- Don't set off noisy fireworks after 11pm