Fireworks and Freedom: That is what and how America celebrates the Fourth of July. We commemorate July 4th, 1776, as the day the Continental Congress approved the final draft of the Declaration of Independence.

It is with great hope that next Tuesday, the Fourth of July, is a day filled with family, friends, BBQ’s, beach trips, small town parades, everything red, white, and blue and of course fireworks.

Did you know Independence Day consistently ranks as America’s most dangerous holiday? In fact, emergency rooms add staff on this day because so many people hurt themselves. But it is not just fireworks that make the holiday so dangerous; it’s also the heat, drowning, and drunk driving that put people at risk. The statistics are off the charts when it comes to injuries on the Fourth of July compared to any other holiday; fireworks account for an average of 9 deaths and over 12,000 injuries every year. In addition, fireworks cause an estimated $50 million dollars in property damage.

Remember whereas fireworks may be visually stunning and a lot of fun to fire off, they are still explosives. If you are handling them yourself, be “Fireworks Smart” before, during and after.

* Before: Choose an open area from spectators, homes, buildings, and dry vegetation. Use a garden hose to wet down the area before firing.
* During: As each device burns out, soak it using a hose or bucket of water.
* After: Place all used items in a covered, fireproof container and leave it outside and away from homes and buildings.

While a lot of people may hit the water to beat the heat on this holiday weekend, it can be especially dangerous if the proper precautions are not taken.

* Always wear life preservers and have enough for everyone on-board.
* Never dive headfirst into unknown bodies of water.
* Always swim with a buddy.
* Know the signs, symptoms, and treatment for hypothermia. While the summer heat may be excessive, our PNW waters are not, the average is only 54 degrees.

*Remember This!*

As you enjoy the sights and sounds of Independence Day, Be Prepared, Be Safe and Be Responsible, most importantly be thankful for the country we live in. Now Have Fun!!