



06/19/2006

Firework safety event hopes to stop hurt

By KIM SCHMIDT , Hub Staff Writer

KEARNEY — Children suffer the most injuries during the July Fourth holiday season.

That's why the Kearney Volunteer Fire Department is doing all it can to prevent those injuries.

From 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, children in kindergarten through sixth grade can learn how to handle fireworks safely. The workshop is free and will be at KVFD Station 1 at 2211 Ave. A.

Parents are required to attend the workshop with their children. But the workshop isn't just for children — firework stand employees are encouraged to attend as well.

"We want to bring safety awareness to young people and parents that fireworks may be fun, but they are dangerous," said Ken Tracy, KVFD's fire administrator. He will be teaching the class. "I think it's important that firework stand workers need to understand what they're selling."

The workshop is based on a similar program sponsored by the Ralston Volunteer Fire Department.

According to the Nebraska State Fire Marshall's office, in 2005, 49 children age 10 and younger were injured by fireworks.

Two-thirds of the reported injuries occurred to children and young adults ages 19 and younger, with firecrackers and sparklers causing the most injuries.

The majority of children were either near the firework when it went off or holding the device when it discharged.

Because fireworks are illegal in Kearney until June 29, no fireworks will be used for demonstration during the workshop.

For more information about the workshop, contact Tracy at 233-3226.

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