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Extreme Conditions Require Special Precautions

Discharging fireworks this summer

Kent, Wash. - July 2, 2015- Because of the extremely high fire danger in King County, the City of Kent and the Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority are asking residents and visitors to be even more careful than they normally would during this year's 4th of July holiday.

Here are some safety tips to help ensure that the dry conditions that we face do not lead to more fires, more property damage, and more injuries.

- Instead of discharging fireworks, consider going and seeing one of the many professional fireworks displays offered throughout the Puget Sound region. The shows are free and the hot weather means it will be comfortable when the shows begin, which is typically at 10:00 pm. City of Kent Mayor Suzette Cooke is encouraging residents to consider a show. "This is an unusual year with hot temperatures and dry conditions that combine to create a high fire danger," she said. "We strongly encourage the public to attend a professional fireworks show like the City of Kent's Fourth of July Splash at Lake Meridian Park and avoid the use of personal fireworks this year."
- Only purchase legal fireworks. Legal fireworks are those that can be purchased at local fireworks stands. Many of the fireworks sold at Reservation stands are illegal in Kent.
- When purchasing legal fireworks, look at buying those that *do not* fly in an uncontrolled manner.
- Because of the increased danger of fires, only discharge fireworks on a flat surface and well away from any combustible materials. These include grasses, shrubs, fences, decks, and shake roofs.
- Keep a garden hose nearby when discharging fireworks and make sure it can reach all parts of the property where the fireworks are being used.
- Be a good neighbor when discharging fireworks and do not endanger other people's property.
- Call 911 immediately if vegetation or structures catch fire. Fires will spread very fast with the extremely dry ground conditions.

BE AWARE that the Kent Police Department will be increasing their emphasis patrols this year. Fines for illegal fireworks or illegal discharging can be as high as \$250 per infraction. "Each year, we hear about fireworks being illegally discharged in the days leading up to the Fourth of July holiday. We are deploying additional officers for vigorous enforcement," Police Chief Ken Thomas warns.

Kent City Council President Dana Ralph added, "The city council would urge all of our residents to celebrate the 4th in a safe and responsible way...If you do decide to light off legal fireworks in Kent we are asking you to use extreme caution and keep yourselves and your neighbors safe. Happy 4th of July!"

Fireworks can only be discharged on the 4th of July in Kent and only between the hours of 9:00 am and 11:00 pm. Report illegal and dangerous fireworks use by calling 911. Remember that there may be a delay in response by the police and fire departments to non-life or property threatening reports due to the high call volume on and near the 4th of July.

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