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## Management and Disposal of Damaged, Unused, or Unexploded Consumer Fireworks

### Technical Guidance Document HW-2009-G1

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This document describes the proper management of unexploded consumer fireworks.

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#### Background

Consumer fireworks are Division 1.4G explosives, which include small fireworks intended for use by the general public. These were formerly referred to as Class C or common fireworks.

Unexploded fireworks are by nature explosive and are very dangerous to dispose of, even if they are damaged, missing their fuses, or wet. They should be handled with extreme caution and disposed of according to the following guidelines. No attempt should ever be made to burn damaged, unused, or unexploded fireworks except by an authorized entity with the approval of KDHE and the local and state fire protection authorities.

#### Management and Disposal

##### Households

Households that have left-over fireworks, fireworks that did not explode, or fireworks that are damaged in some way (e.g., missing fuses, broken, bent, wet) should handle those fireworks with extreme caution. Fireworks should **NOT** be burned.

Small quantities (up to 10 items) of unexploded or unused fireworks or fireworks that are damaged (including wet fireworks) should be completely submerged in water in a container such as a 5-gallon bucket. Once the submerged fireworks have become completely saturated, they should be double bagged in plastic (to keep them wet) and disposed of in the regular trash. Fireworks should not be allowed to dry out once they have become wet.

If larger quantities of fireworks (more than 10 items) require disposal, contact the KDHE Bureau of Waste Management at 785-296-1600 and the local fire protection authority for assistance.

##### Firework Stands and Stores

Fireworks at any firework stand or store that sells fireworks should be managed to protect human health and safety and the environment. Steps should be taken to prevent damage to fireworks in inventory, including packing fireworks in water-proof containers or storage units during threatening weather.

Fireworks that cannot be sold due to damage or other reasons should be managed according to the following guidelines. (If a small quantity needs to be disposed of, follow the preceding guidelines for households.)

- Proper disposal should be arranged immediately or as soon as possible after fireworks are damaged or can no longer be legally sold at that location.
- Unsold fireworks should be returned to the distributor, if possible, for proper storage and/or redistribution.
- Damaged fireworks that are not wet should be put into watertight containers and stored in a cool, dry environment until proper disposal can be accomplished.

- Wet or damp fireworks should be completely submerged in water inside a closed container and kept submerged until proper disposal can be accomplished. If the fireworks are allowed to dry out, they become unstable and spontaneous combustion can occur.
- In the case of a natural disaster resulting in large quantities of damaged fireworks, arrange for disposal with a hazardous waste contractor or contact the local fire protection authority for guidance.

### Local Fire Protection Authority

In some instances, the local fire protection authority may be asked to dispose of fireworks from households or fireworks stands or stores. Disposal of fireworks is extremely dangerous and should be attempted only with the proper training. Please contact the Office of the State Fire Marshal at 785-296-3401 with questions regarding training and burning of fireworks.

The local fire protection authority should also adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Contact the KDHE Bureau of Waste Management at 785-296-1600 to obtain an emergency destruct approval (fireworks are a RCRA hazardous waste).
2. Contact the KDHE Bureau of Air at 785-296-6024 to obtain an open burn exemption.
3. Locate the burn pit in an area that:
  - Has little to no risk of grass fire, forest fire, or structure fire; and
  - poses no risk to a human population.Never locate the burn pit near an active landfill (of any type) unless at least 12 inches of cover has been applied to all waste and landfill activities have been suspended until the conclusion of the burn.
4. Due to the potential for metals, dioxins, and other hazardous constituents to be present in burn residues, remove all burn residues and at least 6 inches of soil from the pit after all burning and smoldering has ceased and the removal can be accomplished safely. All residues and soil should be disposed of at a municipal solid waste landfill utilizing a special waste disposal authorization (SWDA). A SWDA can be obtained from the KDHE Bureau of Waste Management by calling 785-296-1600.
5. Never place blast mats over the pit; the pit should remain open and unobstructed during the burn.
6. Take all necessary safety precautions to prevent injuries.

For additional information regarding the proper management of solid or hazardous waste in Kansas, you may visit the Bureau of Waste Management website at [www.kdheks.gov/waste/](http://www.kdheks.gov/waste/) or contact the Bureau at: (785) 296-1600, [bwm\\_web@kdheks.gov](mailto:bwm_web@kdheks.gov), or the address at the top of this document.