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# Opinions

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## FASNY offers fire safety tips to keep your friends & family safe during July 4 celebrations

SUBMITTED BY THE  
FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF THE  
STATE OF NEW YORK

As New Yorkers gather with their friends and families in the summer weather, many will be hosting barbecues and parties for this upcoming Fourth of July. These holiday celebrations can pose serious safety hazards due to a large increase in firework use.

The Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) offers some key safety tips for your friends and family to follow this upcoming Fourth of July.

"The warmer weather will certainly encourage New Yorkers to engage in various Independence Day activities to kick off summer," FASNY President John P. Farrell said. "Home fire safety doesn't stop at the door – there are still many fire risks outside the home to keep in mind. We want all residents and their families to stay safe as they celebrate this upcoming Fourth of July."

Fourth of July celebrations can cause a great number of emergencies – most fireworks-related injuries (about 66%) occurred in the month surrounding the July 4th holiday (from June 21, 2020, to July 21, 2020). According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), brush, grass or forest fires accounted for three of every five reported fires started by fireworks in 2014-2018. In all, nine of every 10 of the fireworks fires in 2014-18 were outdoor fires. The average amount of fires caused by fireworks amounts to \$43 million worth of property damage annually.

Additionally, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2020, reported fireworks caused an estimated 10,000 injuries



and 19,500 fires annually. Between June and July 2019, 7,300 firework-related injuries were treated in hospital emergency rooms, with sparklers accounting for almost one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries. It is important to remember that, in many cases, the individual injured was not always the individual using the fireworks.

"Rather than take the risk of having you or a loved one get hurt, FASNY is urging New Yorkers to either attend a fireworks display in their town or county – or to watch a professional show that will be televised or livestreamed," Farrell said.

Keep everyone safe by following the important tips from the NFPA and FASNY:

- ✓ Attend a local, professional fireworks show;
- ✓ Livestream a virtual fireworks show;
- ✓ Use glow sticks instead of sparklers;
- ✓ Resist the temptation to get close to the firing site – the best view of a professional fireworks display is from a quarter of a mile or more away; and
- ✓ Do not possess or shoot off fireworks on your own. Besides risking injury to yourself and the crowd watching the demonstration, you will be breaking the law. Fireworks, with the exception of handheld and ground-based sparklers, are illegal in the state of New York.
- ✓ Do not pick up or attempt to relight used or "dud" fireworks – they may still cause serious burns or injury.

### About FASNY

Founded in 1872, the Firefighters Association of the State of New York represents the interests of the approximately 90,000 volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in New York state. For more information, visit [www.fasny.com](http://www.fasny.com).

## National Grid reminds customers to verify identity of individuals claiming to be energy company representatives

SUBMITTED BY  
NATIONAL GRID

National Grid reminds customers to safeguard their information and verify the identity of any representative that visits or calls their home to discuss their energy bills.

In 1996, New York state deregulated its energy markets, allowing utility customers to purchase their electricity and natural gas supply from alternate suppliers. The New York State Department of Public Service maintains a list of authorized energy service companies, also known as ESCOs, operating by region. There are more than 200 ESCOs licensed to operate in New York. ESCOs are known to use door-to-door solicitation and

phone sales and marketing tactics to recruit new customers.

National Grid never engages in door-to-door solicitation, and ESCO employees are not affiliated with us. If an ESCO representative calls or visits your home:

- ✓ Verify their name and company by asking to see their identification. ESCO employees must wear a photo identification card with visible logo.
- ✓ Do not confuse the ESCO employee with National Grid employees. ESCO employees do not work for National Grid and cannot claim to work for us or any other utility. National Grid employees wear identification badges with their photo and our logo.

- ✓ Do not provide your utility account number or a copy of your utility bill to an ESCO representative unless you are interested in their services and are ready to receive an offer.
- ✓ Do not sign any document until you review its terms, including the length of the agreement, explanation of how rates are calculated, how you can contact their customer service, how you will be billed, and conditions of terminating the agreement.

National Grid will not ask for customer account numbers when visiting a home or contacting you by phone. When National Grid staff does come to your home or business, they will wear identification

badges featuring their photo and our company logo. Most, though not all, will arrive in a clearly marked National Grid vehicle. If you have reason to doubt the person at your home is a National Grid employee, ask for their name, request that they wait outside, and call National Grid to verify their identity (800-642-4272).

If you have reason to believe you are in danger or your safety has been compromised from any door-to-door solicitor, lock your doors and call 911.

For more information, visit our website, follow us on Twitter, watch us on YouTube, "Like" us on Facebook, and find our photos on Instagram.

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