



TIPS FOR A SAFE FOURTH OF JULY

It's time for Fourth of July celebrations – fireworks, a backyard barbecue, maybe a trip to the beach. Whatever you have planned, the City of Long Beach wants you to follow these tips to stay safe.

FIREWORKS SAFETY

The safest way for you to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public fireworks show put on by professionals. **Fireworks are illegal in Long Beach** and can be dangerous, yet every year people take needless risks when they celebrate the Fourth of July. Even the so-called *Safe and Sane* fireworks and sparklers can be harmful. Fireworks have been a traditional part of America's Fourth of July celebration. Unfortunately, use of store-bought, ground-based fireworks can often result in serious burns, hearing loss and other injuries.

The National Council on Fireworks Safety reports that for the past several years, there has been a decrease in the fireworks injury rates. A major reason for that decrease has been the increasing popularity of professional fireworks shows, which residents are encouraged to attend. Check your local newspaper for locations of fireworks shows in your area and leave fireworks shows to the professionals.

GRILLING SAFETY

Every year people are accidentally injured while using charcoal or gas grills, often in their backyards. You can follow these steps to safely cook on your barbecue:

- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Never grill indoors – not in your house, camper, tent, or any enclosed area.
- Grill out in the open, away from the house, tree branches, or anything flammable.
- Use long-handled tools especially made for cooking on the grill.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals have already been ignited.
- How to properly dispose of the charcoal: You can place the cover on the grill, close the vents and allow the coals to burn out completely. Let the ashes cool for at least 48 hours and then dispose of them in a non-combustible container, or if you must dispose of coals before they've completely cooled, remove them **individually** with long-handled tongs and carefully bury them in a can of sand or in a bucket of water. Never pour a pail of water over the hot coals, or vice versa. The steam from the charcoal will burn you.

BEACH SAFETY

If plan to visit to the beach, you should follow these safety tips:

- Swim at a lifeguarded beach, within the designated swimming area and obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards. Always swim with a buddy.
- Keep alert for local weather conditions. Check for warning signs or flags.
- Alcohol and BBQs are not permitted on the beach.

- Have young children and inexperienced swimmers wear an approved flotation device.
- Protect the neck – don't dive headfirst. Walk carefully into open waters.
- Keep a close eye and constant attention on children while at the beach.
- Southern California beaches are impacted with sting rays: shuffle your feet, splash and make noise when entering the ocean rather than walking directly into the water. This reduces the risk of being stung on the foot or ankle.
- Rip currents are responsible for most of the rescues performed by lifeguards. Any beach with breaking waves may have rip currents. If someone is caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore until out of the current. Once free, they should turn and swim toward shore. Stay 100 feet away from piers and jetties permanent rip currents often exist near these structures.

BOATING SAFETY

If your day includes enjoying time out on the water, make sure that you and your watercraft are ready for the holiday. Take a boater safety class before going out on the water. Take the time to make sure your vessel is in good working order and you have the required safety gear on board. Find out if you're ready by getting vessel safety check. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offers complimentary checks. Other safety tips include:

- You may have people aboard your vessel who don't normally boat. Familiarize them with the location of the safety equipment and how to be safe aboard you boat. (Keep hands inside near dock, carbon monoxide, propeller safety, etc.) Everyone must wear a life jacket.
- Follow safe boating practices: use an observer if towing a person, stay a safe distance from the shore and use good judgment operating around other watercraft.
- The majority of personal watercraft related accidents occur when someone other than the registered owner is operating the vessel. Make sure that people borrowing your vessel know how to operate it.
- A standup paddle board is considered a vessel; a life jacket is required for each person.
- Bring your life jacket, but leave the alcohol at home. The side effects of alcohol are impaired judgment, reduced balance, and poor coordination which are magnified by the boating environment. It is against the law to operate a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent or more.

SUN PROTECTION

If your planned activities are outdoors, you should follow these tips to stay safe:

- Limit exposure to direct sunlight, particularly between 10am and 4pm.
- Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and reapply sunscreen often.
- Drink plenty of water even if not thirsty and avoid alcoholic or caffeinated drinks.
- Protect your eyes with sunglasses that will absorb 100 percent of UV sunlight.
- Protect your feet with sandals or shoes from hot sand and hazards on the beach or in the parking lot.
- Watch for signs of heat stroke—hot, red skin, changes in consciousness, rapid, weak pulse, or rapid, shallow breathing. If it's suspected someone is suffering from heat stroke:
 - Call 9-1-1 and move the person to a cooler place.
 - Quickly cool the body by applying cool, wet clothes or towels to the skin (or misting it with water) and fanning the person.
 - Watch for signs of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying flat on their back until help arrives.