



Fireworks

Noise Nuisance

Environmental Protection

Noise - Fireworks

Fireworks can frighten people and animals. The elderly and children are frequently scared and intimidated by firework noise. After all, fireworks are explosives. For animals, the impact of a noise can also be serious. Disturbing domestic pets can be dangerous too - as panicked pets may be vicious and destructive. If you're planning a firework party, be considerate to your neighbours.

To minimise problems:

- Tell neighbours - especially the elderly and those with children and pets that you plan to have a firework display - better still, invite your neighbours.
- When purchasing fireworks, avoid really noisy ones - your supplier should be able to tell you what they are selling.
- Make sure pets and other animals are safely away from fireworks.
- Consider timing. If you have a firework party, hold it on a Friday or Saturday and make sure the noise is over by 11.00 pm. For traditional celebrations like New Year and Bonfire Night, avoid continuing noise into the early hours.
- If a neighbour complains that you are disturbing them, their pets or livestock, be considerate.

It is difficult to deal with noise from fireworks as a statutory nuisance; for something to be a nuisance, it has to be a continuous state of affairs. Occasional or 'one off' displays would not fall under this definition. However, the Fireworks Regulations 2004 prohibit anyone under 18 from possessing fireworks, and anyone except professionals from possessing display fireworks in a public place. These regulations also prohibit the use of fireworks at night (11pm - 7am) in England and Wales, with extensions to the curfew for the following festivals:

- Until 01:00 on the night of the Chinese New Year
- Until 01:00 on the night of Diwali
- Until 01:00 on the night of New Years Eve
- Until Midnight on 5 November

These regulations are enforced by the police. There is a penalty of up to £5,000 or 6 months in prison for breach of curfew. The supply, purchase or possession of excessively loud fireworks over 120 decibels are also prohibited.

Under the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 all fireworks for use by the public must meet British Standards BS 7114. Under these regulations, the sale of fireworks to under 18's is banned. This is enforced by trading standards.

The throwing or setting off of fireworks in a highway or street is an offence under the Explosives Act 1875. This is enforced by the police, with a fine of up to £5,000.