

## Sparkler safety reminders for children and adults

Sparklers can be a fun way to light up warm summer nights. With their brilliance and glowing trails through the darkness, sparklers attract both children and adults on special occasions like Independence Day or during backyard barbecues or parties.

Even though sparklers can be fun, people who intend to use sparklers are urged to treat these devices with respect and caution. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that sparklers can burn at 2,000 F, which is as hot as a blow torch, and definitely hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers are responsible for 9 percent of all fireworks burns and other injuries, warns the CPSC.

Sparklers are created by hardening flammable chemicals on the end of a wire or a wooden stick. Unlike other fireworks, sparklers burn slowly due to their chemical composition. This makes sparklers seemingly safer for youngsters to handle. But parents and other guardians may want to reconsider. Emergency rooms repeatedly treat burn injuries to hands and faces resulting from sparkler usage. Kids may be tempted to show sparklers off to their friends and then run and lose their balance or wave the sparkler around and not know others are close by.

When using sparklers, heed the following safety tips from the National Council on Fireworks Safety.

- Ensure that sparklers are

legal where you live prior to purchase.

- Sparklers are best handled by people ages 12 and older. Children younger than 12 require extreme supervision.

- Everyone handling sparklers should wear closed-toe shoes, and not flip-flops or sandals, to protect their feet from sparks.

- Wear eye protection, such as safety goggles.

- Leather gloves or those lined with Kevlar can help protect hands against burns.

- Each person should have his or her own sparkler stick. Only light one at a time.

- Maintain a distance of six feet from one another while sparklers are blazing.

- Even though it can seem festive to wave a sparkler or make circles through the air, doing so increases the risk for injury.

- Remain in an upright position when holding a lit sparkler.

- Tossing or throwing the sparkler is extremely hazardous.

- Do not use sparklers (or other fireworks) while under the influence of alcohol.

- Sparkler sticks can remain hot long after the flame is extinguished. Keep a bucket of water nearby and dump some water on the sparkler after use.

More sparkler and firework safety information is available through the National Council on Fireworks Safety at [www.fireworksafety.com](http://www.fireworksafety.com).

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## Fourth of July party tips

Those planning on hosting a July 4th get-together can consider these tips as they prepare to celebrate with family and friends.

- **Borrow a second grill.**

Those tasked with grilling often find themselves standing there for hours over hot flames. Cut down on time at the grill by adding an extra cooking surface. That's easily achieved by having more than one grill going simultaneously. Cook fast-cooking items like hamburgers and hot dog on one grill, and reserve the other for sausages and chicken, which may need more time to reach safe levels of doneness.

- **Stop peeking.** Resist any urge to check the food too often. Every time you flip, press or move the meats, you compromise flavor and could make the food dry out.

- **Lure insects away.** Bees are attracted to sweet smells, but wasps and hornets are drawn to meats. Put a saucer of very sweet soda and some chicken scraps in a far corner of your yard to attract yellow jackets and other stinging insects to that area, drawing their attention away from guests and their meals.

- **Hire a lifeguard.** If your party will involve time spent in a pool, consider hiring a lifeguard or designate someone to observe pool activities. Party hosts may be distracted by other duties, and one can't count on guests to watch what is going on in the pool. For safety's sake, a dedicated set of eyes on swim-



mers can prevent injuries and accidents.

- **Give neighbors a heads-up.** Parties and barbecues on July 4th are largely expected, but you can offer a courtesy to neighbors by informing them of your plans, including the start time and proposed ending time. If you are close with neighbors, consider inviting them to participate.

- **Skip the fireworks.** Even if fireworks are permitted where you live, it's best to avoid the potential safety hazards and leave fireworks displays to the professionals. Shooting off fireworks in neighborhoods causes debris to rain down on guests or land in pools, and it may even be ingested by pets or wildlife. Even sparklers can be dangerous, as they burn at 2,000 F. In fact, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says sparklers account for around 60 percent of injuries among children under five during summer festivities.

- **Create a patriotic playlist.** Use your favorite music streaming service to curate a music list that features America-specific songs, songs about summer and general party tunes. Be sure the music is in the background and does not overpower the conversation.

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## Fun facts about America's national anthem

July 4, 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Fireworks will illuminate the night sky, the rich smell of barbecue will be in the air, and the country will be awash in red, white and blue splendor. Chances are the swelling melody of "The Star Spangled Banner" will be broadcast over the radio and on various firework display telecasts.

The national anthem is synonymous with the United States of America, and its notes very well may be the patriotic glue that binds the country together. Although the lyrics and music of the song are widely known, many may be unfamiliar with the rich history behind the beloved tune.

- **A poem is born**

America began its fight for independence from Great Britain in 1775, and the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 to identify the 13 colonies that succeeded in winning their independence from Britain. However, the battles with Britain stretched on. Fights over territories kept disputes between the British Empire and the newly formed United States raging on, and it was during one such fight, and not during the Revolutionary War as some may think, that "The Star Spangled Banner" was written.

The War of 1812 was declared by the United States to set right some of the issues that were not resolved after the Revolutionary War. Francis Scott Key was an American lawyer at the time of this war, negotiating for the release of an American hostage being held by the British. Although Key won the hostage's release, he was not able to leave the British fleet where the negotiations took place until the British completed their attack on Baltimore. Key witnessed the British fiery bombs on Ft. McHenry at Chesapeake Bay. Just before dawn on the morning of September 14, 1814, Key was said to have noticed a huge American flag still waving above Ft. McHenry in defiance to the British attack. This imagery helped inspire the words of a poem that eventually would become the national anthem.

Key penned the poem on the back of a letter he held in his pocket. After the battle was



over and Key was released, he completed the poem at the Indian Queen Hotel, where he was staying. The poem was titled, "Defense of Fort M'Henry." The poem was put to music to fit the popular melody "The Anacreonic Song" by English composer John Stafford Smith. Key's brother-in-law, Judge Joseph H. Nicholson, anonymously made the first printing of the lyrics to the melody, and the song was printed in two newspapers. The song quickly became popular, and soon after, Thomas Carr of the Carr Music Store in Baltimore, Maryland published the words and music under a new title, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

- **"The Star-Spangled Banner" takes off**

"The Star-Spangled Banner" became one of the nation's most beloved patriotic songs in the 19th century. According to Smithsonian, the song gained special significance during the Civil War, a time when many Americans turned to music to express their feelings for the flag and the ideals and values it represented. The military used the song for ceremonial purposes, requiring it be played at the raising and lowering of the colors. But many versions of the song were used during these ceremonies and celebrations.

By the 20th century, President Woodrow Wilson wanted to establish a standard version, so he tasked the United States Bureau of Education to provide an official version. In response, the Bureau of Education enlisted the help of five musicians, including Walter Damrosch, Will Earhart, Arnold J. Gantvoort, Oscar Sonneck and John Philip Sousa, to agree on an arrangement. This new standardized version was first played on December 5, 1917, at Carnegie Hall.

It wasn't until March 3, 1931, that "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the official national anthem of the United States when President Herbert Hoover signed this designation into law.

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## How to handle fireworks safely

Fireworks traditionally are part of large summer celebrations -- and though fireworks are awe-inspiring, they're also dangerous, which is why it's best to leave them to the professionals.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that fireworks-related injuries and deaths in the U.S. have risen by roughly 25 percent in the last 15 years. In 2021, nine people died in accidents involving fireworks, and 11,500 were injured.

"The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to watch the professional displays," said Alex Hoeh-Saric, chair of the CPSC.

Three-quarters of fireworks injuries occur the weeks before and following the July 4th holiday. Fireworks can injure any part of the body, but burns to the hands and fingers, trunk, and arms are the most commonly affected areas. Injuries to the eyes, including blindness, also may occur. Sparklers are not necessarily safe, either. The CPSC reports that 1,100 injuries result from sparklers each year.

As fireworks become widely available, it's imperative that individuals follow these crucial safety tips when using them.

- Never allow children to play with or ignite any type of fireworks, including sparklers.

- Keep a bucket of water or garden hose nearby to extinguish fires or sparks.

- Only buy and use fireworks if they are legal.

- Light fireworks one at a time in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

- Choose a field or area free from trees and other obstructions, far away from spectators to light fireworks.

- Never use fireworks while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

- Never point or fire fireworks in the direction of other people.

- Do not place any part of the body directly over fireworks when lighting a fuse.

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# ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

## Airfield Lighting Replacement Lakota Municipal Airport Lakota, North Dakota AIP Project No. 3-38-0080-017-2026

Sealed bids, subject to the conditions contained herein, for improvements to the Lakota Municipal Airport, Lakota, North Dakota, AIP Project No. 3-38-0080-017-2026 will be received by the Lakota Municipal Airport Authority at the Lakota City Hall, 108 East B Avenue, Lakota, North Dakota 58344, until 1:00 PM local time on July 23, 2026 and then publicly opened and read aloud.

Project work consists of but is not limited to the following:

Electrical construction, replace runway and taxiway edge lights, wind cone, rotating beacon, beacon tower, PAPI's, guidance signs, electrical vault, electrical vault equipment, grading, and seeding.

Construction for this project shall be completed by July 2, 2027 for all bid schedules.

The complete set of Plans, Specifications, and Contract Documents can be obtained for a non-refundable fee of \$200.00 at the office of Mead & Hunt, Inc. located at 2505 N. University Drive, Suite 100, Fargo, ND 58102 or may be downloaded for a fee of \$25 at [www.questcdn.com](http://www.questcdn.com) #10253638. Those wishing to download the bidding documents electronically, do so at their own risk for completeness of the bidding documents.

Each bid must be accompanied by a separate envelope containing the contractor's license and bid security. The bid security must be in a sum equal to five percent of the full amount of the bid and must be in the form of a bidder's bond. A bidder's bond must be executed by the bidder as principal and by a surety, conditioned that if the principal's bid is accepted and the contract awarded to the principal, the principal, within ten days after notice of the award, shall execute a contract in accordance with the terms of the bid and the bid bond and any condition of the governing body. If a successful bidder does not execute a contract within the ten days allowed, the bidder's bond must be forfeited to the governing body and the project awarded to the next lowest responsible bidder. The airport reserves the right to reject any and all bids and rebid the project. No bid will be read or considered if the bid does not fully comply with the bidding requirements. Deficient bids will be resealed and returned to the bidder.

The award of the contract is subject to approval of the Federal Aviation Administration and availability of federal funding. See instruction to bidders for additional information. The following Federal Provisions are required:

**Buy American Preference** (49 USC § 50101; Executive Order 14005; Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Pub. L. No. 117-58); Build America; Buy America (BABA))

**Civil Rights** – Title VI Assurance, 49 USC 47123 & FAA Order 1400.11

**Davis Bacon Act**, (2 CFR Part 200, Appendix II (D)); 29 CFR Part 5; 49 USC § 47112 (b); 40 USC § 3141-3144, 3146, and 3147)

**Debarment and Suspension**, (2 CFR Part 180 (Subpart B); 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix II(H); 2 CFR Part 1200; DOT Order 4200.5; Executive Orders 12549 and 12689)

**Disadvantage Business Enterprise**, 49 CFR Part 26

**Federal Fair Labor Standards Act**, 29 USC § 201, et seq & 2 CFR § 200.430

**Foreign Trade Restriction**, 49 USC § 50104 & 49 CFR Part 30

**Lobbying and Influencing Federal Employees**, (49 CFR Part 20, Appendix A; 31 USC § 1352 – Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment; 2 CFR part 200- Appendix II(I))

**Procurement of Recovered Materials**, (2 CFR § 200.323; 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix II (J)); 40 CFR Part 247; 42 USC § 6901, et seq (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA))

**Prohibition of Covered Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** (FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024(Public Law 118-63), Section 936; 49 USC § 44801)

The full text of the above provisions can be found in the bid documents or will be provided by request.

Any questions regarding bids are to be directed to:

**Mead & Hunt, Inc.**

**Address: 2505 N. University Drive, Suite 100, Fargo, ND 58102**

**Phone: 1-701-566-6450**

Advertised on: July 2nd, July 9th, and July 16th, 2026

### 37990 ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025

of the	
American Empire Insurance Company	
In the state of Ohio	
Total Assets	21,864,880
Total Liabilities	4,839
Aggregate write-ins	
for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	3,100,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate Write-ins for	
Other Than Special	
Surplus Funds	0
Surplus Notes	0
Gross Paid in &	
Contributed Surplus	16,100,000
Unassigned funds	
(surplus)	2,660,040
Total Capital &	
Surplus	21,860,040
Total Liabilities,	
Capital & Surplus	21,864,879

### NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2025

Total Direct Premiums	
Earned	0
Total Direct Losses	
Incurred	0
Total Accident &	
Health Direct	
Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident &	
Health Direct	
Losses Incurred	0

### STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

I, Jon Godfread, Commissioner of Insurance of the State of North Dakota, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true Abstract of Statement, as officially filed by the Company in this office.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of this office at Bismarck, the first day of March, A.D. 2026 (SEAL).

**JON GODFREAD**

Commissioner of Insurance  
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
OF INSURANCE

**COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF  
AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, the above corporation duly organized under the laws of its state or country of domicile, has filed in this office a sworn statement exhibiting its condition and business for the year ending December 31, 2025 conformable to the requirements of the laws of this State regarding the business of insurance and

WHEREAS, the said company has filed in this office a duly certified copy of its charter with certificate of organization in compliance with the requirements of insurance law aforesaid,

NOW THEREFORE, I, **JON GODFREAD**, Commissioner of Insurance of the State of North Dakota, pursuant to the provisions of said laws, do hereby certify that the above named company is fully empowered through its authorized agents and representatives, to transact its appropriated business of authorized insurance in the state according to the laws thereof, until the 30th day of April, A.D. 2027.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Bismarck this first day of March, A.D., 2026 (SEAL)

**JON GODFREAD**

Commissioner of Insurance  
(Publish June 18 & 25  
& July 2, 2026)