

Fireworks Ocular Injuries

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The annual occurrence of eye injuries during New Year's Eve celebrations is regrettably recurring.

In numerous countries, New Year's Eve is a festive occasion marked by the use of fireworks. While some countries, such as Australia, have implemented regulations that restrict the sale and use of fireworks to professional establishments, ensuring their relatively safe use for the public, other countries permit the sale, purchase, and use of consumer fireworks by non-professionals.

This practice has resulted in a significant number of eye injuries, in addition to burns and amputations of hands and fingers, over the past several decades.

In the Netherlands and Germany, for instance, there is a one-in-a-hundred-thousand chance of an eye injury occurring on New Year's Eve, and a one-in-a-million chance of blindness. These statistics predominantly affect male individuals under the age of eighteen, with a significant portion of the injuries occurring as bystanders.



Despite the implementation of safety programs aimed at educating consumers, their effectiveness has been limited.

Wearing safety glasses can effectively mitigate the risk of eye injuries, accounting for approximately eighty



percent of cases. However, this measure alone is not sufficient, as many bystanders fail to wear safety goggles.

The most effective solution to this recurring crisis lies in implementing a complete ban on consumer fireworks, as exemplified in Australia, where such incidents have virtually ceased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, firework sales were prohibited in the Netherlands, resulting in a remarkable reduction in the number of eye injuries, from nearly forty during previous New Year's celebrations to only one during the two celebrations in 2020.

If you find yourself confronted with similar challenges in your country, it is imperative that you join the efforts to advocate for a total ban on consumer fireworks.

I extend my best wishes for a joyous, healthy, and safe New Year, 2025.

