



Planning a fireworks display

Keeping our community safe and secure

Explosives Inspectorate

Great state. Great opportunity.



Introduction

Fireworks have been entertaining crowds for over a thousand years. Today, spectacular displays still provide excitement and attraction that few can resist.

Over the years, manufacturers of fireworks have created new colours, sounds and many new effects.

Whether on land or water, at the football or showgrounds, on New Year's Eve or any other day, a well-run fireworks display adds excitement to any event.

A fireworks display takes careful planning. There are different types of fireworks displays including strings of firecrackers, outdoor fireworks, close proximity fireworks and special effects. This publication will help organisers and hosts hold a successful and legal fireworks display.

Regulations

Fireworks contain explosive compositions that burn and/or explode when ignited. These hazards must be controlled to ensure the safety of the fireworks operators and crowds enjoying the displays. Fireworks are controlled under the *Explosives Act 1999*.

Only fireworks contractors licensed under the Explosives Act may put on fireworks displays. Fireworks contractors and operators must be trained to use fireworks and operate to national standards for firework displays.

Possessing fireworks (other than unrestricted items such as sparklers, bonbons, streamer cones or caps for toy pistols) if you are unlicensed is illegal and carries a penalty of up to \$44 000 or six months imprisonment.

Duty of care

Any person involved with a fireworks display has a duty of care under Section 32 of the Explosives Act which states:

A person who is doing an act involving explosives must take reasonable precautions and use reasonable care to avoid endangering any person's safety, health or property.

The three main entities who need to carefully consider their safety obligations and responsibilities for a fireworks display are:

1. **event organiser or display host—the person, organisation, or other party that engages a fireworks contractor to hold a fireworks display**
2. **fireworks contractor—the licensed person contracted to plan and organise the display, purchase fireworks and ensure the display is conducted safely by competent fireworks operators, assistants and other personnel**
3. **fireworks operator—the person licensed under the Explosives Act who is responsible for, or is in charge of, setting up and firing fireworks in accordance with the Queensland code of practice: control of outdoor fireworks displays, available on our website.**

All three parties are responsible for ensuring the fireworks display is carried out safely.



Event organiser responsibilities

An event organiser must:

- select an appropriately licensed fireworks contractor
- ensure appropriate insurance coverage for the display
- consider noise guidelines and appropriate time(s) for display(s) (e.g. hold displays before 9 pm, minimise repeated displays at the same site and limit noise in sensitive areas)
- obtain approval from the landowner or agent where the display is held
- ensure the Explosives Inspectorate, fire and rescue services, local community and other appropriate authorities have been notified before the display
- ensure neighbours of the site are notified at least four days before the display
- provide emergency planning (e.g. first aid and access to and from the display firing site)
- provide enough time for the operator to set-up the display and clean-up afterwards
- ensure crowd control is in place before and during the display
- respond appropriately to changed conditions (e.g. cancel the display due to unsafe weather conditions such as high winds or other factors)
- not allow a fireworks display to proceed if they know the display does not comply with safety requirements
- report any explosives incident that occurs during the display to the Explosives Inspectorate.

Nuisance noise

Guidelines have been prepared to help limit nuisance noise caused by fireworks displays. These include the following considerations.

- Displays should be held before 9 pm on weekdays or before 10 pm on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Selecting fireworks and position of the display to minimise noise levels.
- Limiting the number events at a site (e.g. four per year in residential areas or six per year in commercial or show areas—additional displays may be held at these sites following application and review).
- Conducting fireworks displays on weekends or public holidays (exceptions are made for Chinese New Year and other special events).
- There are restrictions on using specific loud fireworks.

An event organiser **must** have evidence that they have met **all** of the above requirements.



Specific considerations for close proximity fireworks

Fireworks used inside or close to people are called close proximity fireworks. These fireworks are generally used inside buildings and sporting stadiums.

Particular care should be taken by organisers and hosts to ensure that the fireworks contractor and operator have appropriately endorsed licences to conduct close proximity displays.

Special precautions should be undertaken to ensure the safety of audiences and spectators inside buildings. Specific considerations include:

- fireworks should be tested in venue prior to performance
- Fire services should inspect the building for fire safety before conducting close proximity displays
- the design and construction of the fireworks and pyrotechnic effect must not endanger performers and members of the audience
- air conditioning, ventilation and fire alarm systems are managed by competent people during events.

Selecting a fireworks contractor

1. **Sight the contractor's licence.**
 - a. Is the licence current?
 - b. How long have they been licensed?
 - c. Does the licence category cover the fireworks to be used?
2. **Sight the contractor's insurance.**
 - a. Is the policy current?
 - b. Does the policy cover the licence?
3. **Sight the contractor's logbook and records.**
 - a. Does the contractor have documented experience at displays?
 - b. Is their documentation professional in nature and appearance?
4. **Sight the contractor's copy of their safety management system and the Queensland code of practice: control of outdoor fireworks displays.**
5. **Discuss the contractor's plans to notify all appropriate people about the display, including neighbours, the Explosives Inspectorate and fire services.**
6. **Discuss the contractor's crowd control recommendations.**
 - a. Do you consider the recommendations adequate?
 - b. Is it clear who is responsible for achieving adequate crowd control?
7. **Confirm how the contractor will control risks.**

Visit our website for a list of licensed fireworks contractors.



Event organiser checklist

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| Are the weather conditions appropriate? | |
| Is the licensed fireworks contractor or licensed fireworks operator present? | |
| Are there sufficient licensees to supervise the assistants at the display? | |
| Ask to see the display plan and make sure it's what you planned. | |
| Has the contractor notified all appropriate persons? | |
| Have neighbours been informed? | |
| Have the Explosives Inspectorate and fire services been notified? | |
| Ask for a copy of the notification. | |
| Are there sufficient assistants to prepare the display, provide security and clean the site after the display? | |
| Are the fireworks operator and assistants appropriately attired? | |
| Do they have full-length clothing cover? | |
| Do they have head, ear and eye protection? | |
| Are they wearing appropriate footwear? | |
| Is crowd control adequate? | |
| Is the fireworks area properly defined and barricaded? | |
| Are the spectators aware of their responsibility to obey the fireworks operator, assistants and security personnel? | |
| Is there appropriate safety equipment at the display site? | |
| Fire extinguishers. | |
| First aid equipment. | |
| Confirm the contractor's plan for cleaning up after the display, including searching the entire area for fireworks material. | |
| Is it too dark for a proper search at night? | |
| Is a further search in the morning necessary? | |
| Will all equipment be removed from the site? | |



More information

Call us on **13 25 23**

Email us at **explosives@dnrm.qld.gov.au**

Visit our website **www.dnrm.qld.gov.au**

To report an explosives incident, make a complaint or request collection or disposal of explosives, contact your regional office—visit our website for regional contact details.

The Explosives Inspectorate **1300 739 868** hotline can be used at any time to report an incident or emergency.