INFORMATION

about the handling of fireworks

Wir wollen, dass Sie sicher leben. Ihre Polizei

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New Year's Eve

Please be cautious when using fireworks on New Year's Eve

Every year, people all over the world celebrate New Year's Eve on the night of 31 December to 1 January. Many people enjoy the annual fireworks and sometimes spend a lot of money on fire crackers, etc. Unfortunately, people frequently burn or hurt themselves because they do not know how to handle fireworks or set off illegal or improvised fireworks. They are not aware that this is often considered a criminal offence

Regarding the use of fireworks, there are strict rules in Germany:

- **Only adults aged 18 or older are allowed to use fireworks on New Year's Eve** (F2 fireworks). Small fireworks (F1 fireworks) such as indoor fireworks, sparklers and other items for indoor use can also be used throughout the year by persons aged 12 or older. However, if you want to sell, possess and use F3 and F4 fireworks, you need to obtain a special official permit.
- **New Year's Eve fireworks can be sold only during the last three days of the year** and **can be purchased by adults only.** Violations are punishable pursuant to the Explosives Act.
- Fireworks must have been tested by the Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM) or another designated authority with similar responsibilities. Fireworks that have been tested and authorized bear an **official authorization mark. In Germany, only authorized fireworks can be sold and set off.**
- **It is prohibited to use non-authorized fireworks** because illegal fireworks may cause serious injuries, such as acoustic trauma, (chemical) burns, loss of limbs, respiratory distress or lung damage. Such fireworks (also called Polen-Böller in Germany) often look like fireworks that may be legally sold. However, they do not carry the CE mark and registration number (see box) that help you recognize authorized fireworks. Non-authorized fireworks are produced mainly in China, but also in other European countries, and are often sold at the German–Polish border.

How to recognize authorized fireworks

The most important elements are the CE mark and the authorization mark (registration number). Next to the CE mark, there is a four-digit number, e. g. CE **0598**. An example of an authorization mark is **0589 – F2 – 1234**. **F2** which can be found in the middle of the authorization mark stands for the F2 category of fireworks.

Whoever wants to purchase, possess and use F3 or F4 fireworks must have an official authorization.

Example of a label

Super-Böller (KNALLKÖRPER) NEM ca. 2,5 g 0589-F2-0010
KAT F2
Art.-Nr.: 1234GHB

Abgabe an Personen unter 18 Jahren verboten!

Nur im Freien verwenden! Einzeln auf den Boden legen, Anzündschnur am äußersten Ende anzünden und sich sofort mindestens 8 m entfernen.

Hersteller und Anschrift CE 0589
Tel.-Nr.

You can buy New Year's Eve fireworks only from registered retail stores

- To make sure you have authorized and safe fireworks, please purchase your New Year's Eve fireworks only in **regular stores**, such as supermarkets, because some pyrotechnic articles also bear fake CE marks.
- Illegal and therefore prohibited fireworks are often sold by street vendors, e.g. at festivals or events.
- When making online purchases, please make sure that the online shop is registered and certified.
- Please do not buy fireworks produced abroad because they might not have been tested and are thus prohibited in Germany. The use of such fireworks can be extremely dangerous and life-threatening.
- **Fireworks which have not been tested and authorized are prohibited in Germany. The law (Explosives Act) says you must not possess, hand over or set off such fireworks.** Anyone who violates the law can be sentenced to up to three years in prison or will be required to pay a fine of up to €50,000.
- According to explosives and customs law it is also forbidden to **import fireworks that have not been tested.**

2018.12

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It is illegal and extremely dangerous to produce your own firework

» It is highly dangerous to build your own firework. Even the smallest thermal or mechanical impacts may cause the explosion of improvised fireworks and lead to serious bodily injury and property damage. Every year, people trying to build their own firework are killed by explosives.

▶ Furthermore, anyone who **builds their own explosive device**, for example with the help of online instructions, **commits a criminal offence**. Improvised explosives are subject to the Weapons Act and/or the Explosives Act and are considered explosive devices.

▶ Violations are punishable by imprisonment of six months to five years. **It is** also **illegal to cause an explosion.**

Setting off fireworks is not allowed everywhere

» In Germany, you can set off fireworks only **on New Year's Eve on the night of 31 December to 1 January.**

» In some municipalities, fireworks can be set off only between 6 pm and 6 am.

» In some city centres or designated areas, it is forbidden to set off fireworks, e.g. because there are half-timbered houses or thatched houses that burn down easily.

» **Fireworks are generally forbidden in the immediate vicinity of churches, hospitals, children's homes, retirement homes, etc.**

» Furthermore, municipalities are allowed to forbid the use of fireworks entirely.

How to use fireworks safely

» **Authorized fireworks are safe if you use them correctly. So please read and follow the instructions carefully.**

» Do not use fireworks that have visible defects. Fireworks that did not explode should be disposed of.

» **Use fireworks outside on a hard surface in a clear and open area**

» For safety reasons, there should always be a **distance of eight metres between the firework and persons or buildings.**

» Please use any additional features the firework may have to make it more stable (e.g. kickstands).

» To fire off crackers, please use adequate "ramps" such as heavy bottles, etc.

» Direct any fireworks away from branches, balconies and other obstacles.

» **It is strictly forbidden to use fireworks indoors.**

» If the firework does not explode, **stay away for at least 15 minutes** before, for example, putting it in a bucket filled with water and afterwards adding it to your household waste.

Disposing of used fireworks

Anyone who uses fireworks on New Year's Eve is required to clean streets and pavements once fireworks have cooled down. Fireworks litter can be added to household waste.

▶▶▶ For more information, please visit our website
www.polizei-beratung.de

With kind regards

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