



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EcoNewsWire

Environmental Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safety tips to enjoy fireworks, protect sensitive people

MEDIA CONTACT: Brian Hutchins at 515-725-9550 or Brian.Hutchins@dnr.iowa.gov.

As much as we love fireworks displays, drifting smoke can cause breathing problems for some and large crowds may pose a risk this year.

COVID-19 has caused some towns to cancel fireworks displays, while others have modified their events. Whether attending a display or celebrating in your backyard, keep these four safety tips in mind.

“First, if your family or friends suffer from asthma or respiratory difficulties, it’s important for them to stay upwind, a safe distance from fireworks smoke,” says Brian Hutchins, DNR air quality supervisor. “The elderly and children are also vulnerable to higher levels of smoke.”

Sensitive people are most likely to have trouble breathing when air is stagnant. With no breeze, fine particles can be trapped near the ground and build to unhealthy levels.

Smoke contains fine particles and gases, which can be hard on the lungs. Fine particles in fireworks’ smoke are produced from black powder used to shoot fireworks skyward along with the metals that produce brilliant colors.

Those unable to avoid areas of dense smoke should limit outdoor activity and contact their health care provider if they experience difficulty breathing.

Second, while fireworks and celebrations go together, remember fireworks can cause serious burns and eye injuries. The Iowa Department of Public Health encourages families to make sure an adult supervises fireworks and keeps young children from playing with or igniting them. Keep fireworks pointed away from you and others when igniting them, and back up quickly after lighting. If fireworks don’t ignite or burn fully,

don't try to relight them or pick them up. Keep a bucket of water or hose on hand to respond to a fire or mishap.

The Iowa Department of Public Health reports there were 13 inpatient hospitalizations and 121 outpatient hospitalizations related to fireworks injuries last year. Check for more safety tips from the [Consumer Product and Safety Commission](#). Check with local authorities for restrictions on shooting fireworks inside city limits. Note that fireworks are prohibited in state parks, only sparklers are allowed.

Third, stay six feet away from others, gather in groups of 10 or less, cover your mouth and nose, and wash hands or use a hand sanitizer frequently. Stay home if you or someone in your household is sick. Find guidelines to protect yourself and others under Coronavirus resources at coronavirus.iowa.gov/ or at the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Finally, play it safe and [dispose of your unused fireworks](#) carefully. Safe storage and disposal protects you, your family and your waste haulers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has [fireworks guidelines for businesses](#).

In 2017, Fourth of July fireworks in Des Moines gave rise to fine particle levels that exceeded national standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Learn more about [fine particles \(PM2.5\)](#) and how [fireworks displays](#) can affect sensitive populations.

DNR enforcement actions

**MEDIA CONTACT: Tamara McIntosh, DNR, at 515-725-8242
or Tamara.McIntosh@dnr.iowa.gov.**

DES MOINES -- DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions.

For copies of the orders below, contact Kelli Book at Kelli.Book@dnr.iowa.gov. Older actions can be found at www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions.

Consent Orders

A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Lyon County

Van Essen Farms

Operate in compliance with laws governing animal feeding operations and water quality, implement a plan of action to prevent all unpermitted discharges from the feedlot in the future and pay a \$1,500 administrative penalty.

Air Quality permits under review

**MEDIA CONTACT: Sarah Piziali, DNR, at 515-725-9549
or Sarah.Piziali@dnr.iowa.gov for construction permits.**

DES MOINES – The DNR Air Quality Bureau has the following draft permits up for review. The permits help protect Iowans' health and air quality. DNR's permitting staff review each permit application to ensure facilities comply with state and federal air quality requirements. We encourage public comments on draft permits, providing help on how to [make effective comments](#). Submit written comments to the assigned permit writer before 4:30 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. DNR considers public comments before finalizing the permits.

Construction Permits

DNR engineers review and issue construction permits to facilities before they build new or modify existing sources of air pollution. The public may review the following air quality construction permits available online at www.iowadnr.gov/airpermitsearch.

Clinton County

ADM Clinton Corn Processing, 1251 Beaver Channel Parkway, Clinton
Project Number 20-159. The proposal is for changes to the corn wet milling operations, specifically the alcohol plant, for production of industrial-grade alcohol. ADM intends to make necessary repairs to two alcohol distillation columns to make them operational for production of 190-proof industrial grade alcohol. The facility also plans to utilize four existing storage tanks and four existing loadout systems to produce and ship industrial alcohol by truck, rail or barge. Public comment runs from July 3 to Aug. 3.

A note on Iowa DNR and COVID-19

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working with state and local officials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and has transitioned employees to work remotely. DNR offices are closed to the public during this time and only available by appointment.

In another effort to further reduce the spread of COVID-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

- [Full list of DNR's online services](#)
- [Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to COVID-19](#)

We thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time. If you need to contact DNR staff you can reach them by email or phone or by calling 515-725-8200.