

Fireworks safety and age restricted sales

Trading Standards Information

www.southwark.gov.uk

1. Introduction

Fireworks are explosives and have the potential to kill or injure if used inappropriately. This retailer leaflet explains the product safety regulations that aim to reduce the level of injuries and ensure fireworks comply with UK safety laws. Retailers must act with due care to ensure their stock complies.

In addition anyone storing explosives must be licensed by the Council. Separate health & safety storage regulations must be complied with. Please refer to our guidance 'Fireworks licensing and storage'.

2. Main legal requirements – for firework stock

- Fireworks must be classified either category F1, F2, F3 or F4 depending on the intended use or purpose and level of hazard, including noise level
- Retailers may only supply **CE** or **UK CA** marked category F1, F2 or F3 fireworks that comply with UK/EU safety standards and are labelled with the information listed in section 4. Note that certain types of F2 and F3 fireworks cannot be sold in the UK – see section 5
- Sparkler packets must be labelled **Warning: not to be given to children under 5 years of age**
- Fireworks pre-packed in selection boxes or multi-packs must not be split up and sold separately



3. Main legal requirements – age and category restrictions

- Selling category F2 or F3 fireworks to anyone under the age of **18** is illegal
- No person under 18 may possess category F2 or category F3 fireworks in a public place
- A warning sign must be displayed in all premises selling F2 and F3 fireworks – see section 6
- Selling category F1 fireworks to anyone under the age of **16** is illegal (these are low-hazard and low-noise, such as party poppers etc. For Christmas crackers the minimum age is 12 years old. Caps for toy guns are not subject to age restrictions)
- Category F4 fireworks may only be supplied to persons with specialist knowledge and no person may possess category F4 fireworks unless they authorised to do so by the regulations

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4. Product labelling requirements

EU wide regulations for fireworks continue to be mirrored by UK law although there will be some labelling changes once a transition period ends. You must check your stock bears the following information;

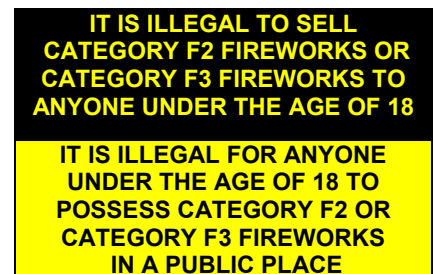
▪ Name, type and category of firework	▪ The name or trade mark of the manufacturer and postal address	▪ Name or trade mark of the UK or EU importer and postal address
▪ Net explosive quantity / mass	▪ Minimum age of persons to whom the item can be supplied	▪ Registration number of the firework
▪  mark or  mark	▪ Instructions and safety information relevant to the category of firework	

5. F2 and F3 fireworks banned from sale to the general public in the UK

▪ Mini-rockets	▪ Aerial wheels	▪ Shot tubes (air bombs, shell in mortar)
▪ Bangers, flash bangers, double bangers and combinations including one or more of these (other than a wheel) or any battery containing bangers, flash bangers or double bangers		
▪ Shot tubes which produce a report as its principal effect (i.e. a sudden loud noise of or like an explosion or gunfire) or shot tubes with an inside diameter greater than 30mm		
▪ Jumping crackers, jumping ground spinners and spinners		

6. Warning sign to be displayed

A notice must be displayed at all premises that supply or expose for supply category F2 or F3 fireworks. The notice shall be at least 420mm x 297mm (A3 size), with letters at least 16 mm high. The notice must contain the information shown. We provide free notices.



7. Who does the law apply to?

The law applies to any distributors (including retailers), manufacturers and importers of fireworks. The business owner will be liable for any illegal sales by employees. Directors and officers of Limited companies are liable to prosecution as well as the company itself.

8. What can I do to avoid underage sales?

Make sure all your sales staff read our separate leaflet entitled *Best practice guidance – age restricted sales* and our guidance on asking for proof of age and saying no. Note we check compliance with the law at firework premises by conducting surveillance and test purchases using underage volunteers.

9. What happens if I don't comply with the requirements?

These requirements are contained in the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015, as amended by the Product Safety and Metrology etc. (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, the Fireworks Regulations 2004 as amended, which were made under the Fireworks Act 2003, and safety regulations made under the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Failure to comply could result in goods being seized and prosecution. On conviction the courts may impose a fine or imprisonment of up to 3 months, or both. For offences relating to fireworks other than category F1, F2 or F3 the courts may impose a fine or imprisonment of up to 2 years, or both.

10. Further information

If you require further assistance on these regulations, or would like additional information, please contact us at the address given or visit the business companion website www.businesscompanion.info