



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Photo Attached*

## **Keep Your Eyes Safe From 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks**

*(Honolulu, Hawaii)*, July 2, 2013 – Independence Day is a day full of family fun and fireworks. However, whether you're thinking of attending a professional fireworks show or setting some off on your own, you should definitely keep safety in mind. June 1 to July 4 has been declared National Fireworks Safety Month.

In 2012, all consumer fireworks were banned in the state of Hawaii because of fire, air quality and noise complaints. However, the public is still able to purchase a \$25 permit which allows them 5,000 tubes of firecrackers.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, over 9,000 fireworks injuries occur in the United States each year, and about 45 percent of those injuries are sustained by children under 15 years old. Eyes are among the most injured body parts, and one in six fireworks-related eye injuries results in permanent vision loss or blindness.

Eyes are extremely vulnerable to the hazards of fireworks. Out-of-control bottle rockets cause some of the most serious eye injuries, such as scratched corneas, detached retinas or ruptured eyeballs.

"It is very important for the public to understand the dangers of using fireworks and how that can possibly affect your eyes," explained Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., medical director of the Hawaiian Eye Center and Dry Eye Clinic. "People often get careless or carried away and that can result in serious injuries."

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Because of these hazards, the American Academy of Ophthalmology strongly recommends attending a professional public fireworks show instead of using fireworks on your own.

These safety tips are recommended to prevent eye injuries this Fourth of July:

- Keep young children away from fireworks and closely supervise any teens who are handling fireworks.
- Ensure that the surrounding area has been cleared of flammable materials.
- View fireworks from at least 500 feet away.
- When attending a professional fireworks display, be sure to remain in the designated viewing areas and stay inside the safety barriers. Never touch an unexploded display.
- Do not handle professional-grade fireworks unless you are a trained pyrotechnician.

It is very important for the public to be aware of the potential risks of using fireworks. By following these tips, you are less likely to sustain an eye injury, and your Fourth of July experience will be much safer.

*Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at the Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 or visit [www.HawaiianEye.com](http://www.HawaiianEye.com) and [www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter](http://www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter), where "life has never looked better."*

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