

The time of year when many of us like to enjoy fireworks has now arrived. Fireworks literally light up a gloomy winter's night and give a great opportunity for having fun with family and friends. Powerful advertisements giving important safety advice are produced each year, but **are you aware of the law on fireworks?**

The Government has put in place a package of legislation to protect communities from the anti-social use of fireworks. We would urge people to use and enjoy fireworks responsibly by taking heed of government legislation.

The following powers are available to police officers and committing any of these offences carries a maximum of a £5,000 fine, six months in prison, or both:

- **Throwing fireworks or setting fireworks off in public places** (someone's own garden or yard is not a public place so is not included)
- **Possession of 'adult fireworks' by anyone under the age of 18** (this includes *all* fireworks except for a cap, cracker snap, novelty matches, party poppers, serpents and throwdowns where the legal age of purchase is 16)
- **Possession of category 4 fireworks (public display fireworks) by anyone other than a fireworks professional** (category 4 fireworks are clearly labelled)
- **Using 'adult fireworks' between the hours of 11pm and 7am –** except for 'permitted' fireworks nights where the curfew begins later:
 - 5 November – 12 midnight
 - Diwali – 1am
 - New Year's Eve – 1am
 - Chinese New Year – 1am

The above offences are contained within the Explosives Act 1875, the Fireworks Act 2003 and the Fireworks Regulations 2004.

Misuse of fireworks may also amount to a **breach of the peace**, particularly where an individual lets off a firework in the street and is causing a nuisance or where fireworks are being let off at an unreasonable hour of the night.

Further information on how to enjoy fireworks within the law, fireworks safety and the fireworks code can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks.