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MEDIA RELEASE

DON'T BE FOOLISH WITH FIREWORKS – IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE

Fireworks go on sale today under new regulations raising the minimum purchasing age to 18 and shortening the sale period.

The Chief Executive of the Environmental Risk Management Agency, Rob Forlong, says the government and emergency services want people to enjoy Guy Fawkes, but also to remind people about the regulations and the need to use fireworks sensibly.

“Guy Fawkes is a good time for communities to come together and enjoy spectacular events. However, along with all New Zealanders, we want to see an end to the damage caused by fireworks when they aren't used as they should be. The new regulations are designed to reduce the irresponsible use of fireworks.”

Mr Forlong says the intention is to let people have fun, but also to prevent children having unsupervised access to fireworks. “Safety should be at the forefront of people's minds.”

Mr Forlong says the shortened sale period – four days, down from 10 – should limit the use of fireworks.

Fire Service Acting National Commander Paul McGill says the Fire Service wants people to see the use of fireworks as a serious responsibility.

“If you can, go and enjoy a community event with family or friends. If you choose to use fireworks at home, please ensure they are supervised by an adult, that the instructions are read carefully and organise a safe display so that your friends and family, pets and buildings are not at risk.”

The new rules mean fireworks can be sold only from 2 – 5 November, the age at which people can buy them has been raised from 14 to 18, and sparklers must now be sold in packs with other fireworks, not separately.

The New Zealand Fire Service, New Zealand Police, Environmental Risk Management Authority and the Ministry for the Environment are running a fireworks safety campaign and have developed a website with safety tips and a list of many of the public displays around the country – www.guyfawkes2007.govt.nz

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www.GuyFawkes2007.govt.nz

Joint media release from the Environmental Risk Management Authority, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Police and New Zealand Fire Service.