

Reminder: Only licensed professionals can operate sky lanterns in TN

NASHVILLE, TN – To ensure that special events are celebrated safely, the State Fire Marshal's Office wants to remind Tennesseans of legislation passed in 2011 concerning sky lanterns. They are to be operated only by licensed fireworks professionals.

Sky lanterns, also known as Chinese lanterns or wish lanterns, are unmanned airborne paper lanterns fueled by a flame. According to TCA § 68-104-101(9), they are special fireworks, and can be purchased and used by only individuals with a professional license (certified flame effect operator, certified outdoor display operator or certified proximate pyrotechnic operator). The general public cannot purchase or use sky lanterns, and if found in the possession of someone who does not have a professional license issued by the State Fire Marshal, sky lanterns can be confiscated and later destroyed.

Potential problems associated with using these airborne lanterns include ignition of combustible materials (grass, trees, rooftops, or other materials) when they fall from the sky, as well as a possible livestock hazard when animals consume the remains of the lanterns. This time of year also poses an additional hazard because many areas of the state might be experiencing drier conditions that could intensify risk of damage by sky lanterns.

Abiding by this law can help safeguard Tennesseans from fire injury and property loss. To further ensure safety, the State Fire Marshal's Office advises citizens to enjoy fireworks by attending public displays conducted by trained professionals.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is a division of the Department of Commerce and Insurance, which works to protect consumers while ensuring fair competition for industries and professionals who do business in Tennessee. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.