



**Reeves County**  
Hospital District

Press Release  
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## Safety First for the Fourth of July Celebrations

*Enjoy the Independence Day holiday and summer fun safely by following a few tips.*

PECOS, Texas (June 27, 2022) – Nothing says Fourth of July like the fireworks display likely to be on view in most cities throughout the USA. Likewise, backyards and city streets will also serve as a launching pad for the colorful pyrotechnics that herald the nation’s birthday like nothing else.

“While everyone looks forward to a wonderful celebration, it can easily be marred by a sudden accident,” Brenda McKinney, CEO of Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) noted. “After all, when dealing with fireworks, we are talking about fire. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), deaths from misuse or poor handling of fireworks increases each year. In addition, CPSC research shows that nearly 16,000 people required emergency room treatment for fireworks-related injuries in 2020, up from approximately 10,000 the year before. Injuries to hands/fingers accounted for the highest percentage of bodily injuries at 30%. But head, face and ear injuries followed closely behind.

“We don’t share these figures to scare people away from the Independence Day ritual that we all love,” McKinney acknowledges. “But RCHD wants people to be aware of the risks that come with setting off fireworks. These are risks that may be avoided by including a few safety measures in your holiday plans.”

Never allow small children to play with fire crackers, sparklers, and other firework materials. Keep a fire extinguisher handy when you set off fireworks. In addition, and this probably is known to most people, fireworks should be set off outside, never in the house. Do not point fireworks at people, animals, or objects.

A few other fireworks safety tips include not attempting to re-light a “dud” firework; not using “home-made” fireworks; and lighting only one firework at a time. Another important point to remember is to postpone setting off fireworks on a windy day. This can be especially dangerous. Winds can carry sparks away from your perimeter to trees, grass, wood sheds and other perhaps easily flammable materials.

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Fireworks should be stored in a cool, dry place and definitely out of the reach of children or pets. When the fun is over, soak the charred remains in a bucket of water.

It is also important to know that outdoor grilling can be a potential source of injury as well.

It is advisable to check the gas cylinder hose for leaks on a gas grill before starting to cook. This can be done by applying a light soap and water solution to the hose and checking for bubbles, which would indicate a leak. If using a charcoal grill, never add lighter fluid to already kindled coals. Keep in mind that coals can remain hot for hours after the cooking is done and the food has been removed from the grill.

Always stand a safe distance away from the grill when first starting. And, obviously, grilling should be done outdoors. McKinney notes that nearly 9,000 home fires are caused by grills yearly and nearly 17,000 people end up in the emergency room due to grill-related injuries.

Keep in mind the importance of preventing cross contamination by keeping raw chicken and raw beef separate and using different utensils for both.

"Your summer fun can be more enjoyable and safer by pledging to follow these simple guidelines to safety," McKinney said. "Happy July 4<sup>th</sup> and please safely enjoy all your summer outdoor activities."

### About Reeves County Hospital District

Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) provides healthcare services for people in Reeves County and neighboring communities in West Texas. Founded in 1954, RCHD, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers a wide variety of medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic radiology, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory and more. RCHD also operates American Home Health and Hospice and the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, which offers family care, immunizations and other medical services. For more information, please visit [www.reevescountyhospital.com](http://www.reevescountyhospital.com).

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