

Buying Fireworks

When I buy fireworks what do I need to look out for?

When buying fireworks you have a huge amount of options to choose from. Fireworks range from Sparklers through to Rockets with a wide selection in between. The first thing you need to decide is what type of display you want, the audience who will be watching it and of course your budget. Once you have determined each of these it's time to start looking for some fireworks! There are a whole range of places that sell fireworks either from a retail shop or others that sell fireworks online. Take a look around and be patient when choosing your supplier, make sure you are happy with the products they stock and that they are good quality and are to British and European Standards (wherever you may be based).

For family and small garden firework displays you can buy display packs that have a mixture of different types of fireworks such as Rockets, Fountains and Shot Cakes. These boxes tend to be more colourful and offer effect rather than loud bangs and crackles.

If you are looking for something more impressive for an adult audience then maybe a single ignition display unit is for you, otherwise known as a Single Ignition Display (SID) in a box. All you have to do is light one fuse, stand back and watch a fireworks display with no headache, for a bigger impact perhaps buy two or three single ignitions for an amazing effect.

If this still doesn't satisfy your needs and you want something a lot bigger and powerful that your audience will not forget then you may want to consider a professional fireworks team to carry out your display for you. It will cost you significantly more than retail fireworks but is unrivalled when it comes to impact, effect and enjoyment.

Regardless of whether you buy fireworks in person or online there are some important things you need to look out for:

- By law fireworks must be classified to British Standards BS7114 or its EU equivalent. Ensure they have been tested for safety, debris fall out and safety fuse delays
- Check your fireworks are completely intact and are undamaged
- Don't forget to buy some firework safety lighters such as Portfires, especially with mail orders as they cannot be sent afterwards on their own
- It is recommended to watch video clips of the fireworks in-store or on-line before you buy so you can make sure you are buying fireworks that best suit your display.

Buying retail fireworks

It is legal to buy consumer fireworks and let them off all year round, although a lot of people are under the impression that it is only allowed around Guy Fawkes Night. This is because most non-specialist firework outlets like supermarkets and corner shops only apply for a temporary sales licence to sell them for the fireworks season.

There are in fact a large number of specialist fireworks shops all over the UK that are open all year round. There are also a number of online firework stores that sell fireworks all year round with the added benefit of delivery to your door.

So our advice would be to always try and find a specialist fireworks retailer rather than buy from a seasonal outlet who only stock fireworks as a sideline. YTM Fireworks is just that!

Here are some good reasons why:

- Specialist fireworks retailers know a great deal about their products whereas seasonal outlets such as supermarkets can only tell you what is written on the firework's label. It is a sad fact that a lot of supermarket staff are unable to even understand the difference between a rocket and a roman candle so don't expect them know what each product does.
- The specialist retailers who are open all year will be available for advice and to help afterwards in case of any problems. Seasonal fireworks shops generally close their doors after the season and are only in it for the money.
- You will find that most specialist retailers usually have a broad range of fireworks by different manufacturers. A seasonal supplier usually selects a few profitable lines they want you to be buying from.
- Specialist suppliers also stock reliable ancillary fireworks items such as portfires (professional lighters), remote firing systems and safety products.
- Specialist retailers these days normally have video clips available to show what each product does before you purchase so you can select exactly what you are looking for.

Buy fireworks online

If you don't live near a fireworks shop or prefer the convenience of ordering online then you have a huge choice of retailers who can ship fireworks to you by courier direct to your door.

You will normally have to pay a shipping fee to have your fireworks delivered but saves you the hassle of collecting your products from a shop. Most retailers charge between £15 and £30 depending on quantity ordered and weight of shipment. The reason delivery charges can be fairly expensive is because fireworks are classed as explosives and a specialist courier has to be used. Shipping fireworks to remote locations can sometimes work out even more expensive ranging from £50 to £100 for big display packs. Also something to bear that in mind before you question your supplier for charging £20 delivery, a lot of companies are making a loss on the delivery charge.

Firework orders will always require a signature on delivery by someone who is over 18 years old. It is illegal to hand over fireworks to under eighteens. They will come packed in their original boxes (normally referred to as UN boxes). All firework cartons have to be clearly marked, by law, as containing explosives (usually recognised as 1.4G or 1.4S within an orange diamond sticker).

A minimum order cost usually applies as a result of these delivery charges. It is simply not viable for a retailer to pack and ship a few packets of sparklers by courier, for example.

Laws for buying fireworks

Fireworks can only be sold and supplied to persons over the age of 18 years old. This includes sparklers as they are classed as fireworks so the same laws apply. It is also illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of fireworks in a public place. It is not a legal requirement to have any kind of licence or training to buy consumer fireworks.

Category 4 (Professional) fireworks are strictly for the use of a fully qualified professional fireworks company with all year insurance and licensed storage.

All consumer fireworks should conform to British Standards (BS 7114) and be classified as Category 2 (Garden) or Category 3 (Display) fireworks, or conform to the EU equivalent, or carry a CE mark. There is a legal noise limit of 120db on all consumer fireworks.

Certain items are banned in the UK. These include bangers, air bombs and jumping jacks.