

## NEWS

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### **The American Academy of Audiology and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities Recommend Protecting Your Hearing for Fourth of July Fireworks** Americans impacted by hearing loss hits record numbers

**Dover, DE, June 28, 2018**—As the Fourth of July nears and growing numbers of Americans are reporting hearing loss, the American Academy of Audiology and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) are cautioning the public to protect their hearing during firework displays. Noise from fireworks can reach up to 155 decibels. To put this into perspective, this is louder than a jet plane taking off (150 decibels) or a jackhammer. Damage to hearing can come from multiple lifetime exposures as well as a one-time blast, or extended exposure up to eight hours. According to the Centers for Disease Control, [loud noise over 120 decibels can cause immediate harm to hearing](#).

Surprisingly, the greatest risk to hearing is not the professional fireworks displays (although these can pose a risk), but the backyard fireworks people use themselves to celebrate. “Never hold a firework or firecracker, with the intention to throw it before it explodes. Even if you do throw it in time (to avoid injury to your hands and face), if it is anywhere close to you when it explodes, your hearing can be immediately, permanently damaged,” cautioned Nick Fina, Chair, SCPD. Fina continued, “The inner ear contains delicate hair cells which do not regrow. Once these are damaged by noise, the result is permanent hearing impairment.”

Signs of hearing loss may include:

- Hearing ringing, buzzing, or hissing noises one or more days after exposure to fireworks.
- Muffled hearing after the fireworks.
- Suddenly having to turn up the volume of the television, radio, or stereo and having other family members complain that the volume is too loud.
- Difficulty understanding people speaking to you and asking people to repeat themselves.
- Difficulty with phone conversations and understanding the other person.
- Sudden inability to hear the door bell, crickets, the dog barking, and other household sounds.
- People telling you that you speak too loudly.
- Ringing in the ears.
- Ear pain.

The National Institutes of Health [recommends using ear plugs](#) when around fireworks or other loud noises.

“Children are at particular risk for hearing loss from ‘backyard’ fireworks displays, because of their excitement and curiosity and wishing to be close to the activity,” Fina explained.

[According to a 2016 study](#) by the National Institutes of Health NIDCD, approximately 15 percent (37.5 million) of American adults aged 20 to 69, have some trouble with hearing and

approximately 28.8 million could benefit from the use of hearing aids. As the baby boomer population ages, more Americans are forced to face hearing health challenges. Growing numbers of younger Americans (including millennials and GenX'ers) are also reporting hearing problems. Anyone being exposed to loud noises, particularly for any duration, should wear ear hearing protection. The American Academy of Audiology recommends that, anyone experiencing the above symptoms should make an appointment with an audiologist.

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. The active membership of more than 12,000 is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information or to find an audiologist, go to <http://www.howsyourhearing.org/>.

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality (CODHHE) are state government entities that advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities. The mission of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities is to unite, in one Council, disability advocates and State agency policy makers to ensure that individuals with disabilities are empowered to become fully integrated within the community. The mission of the Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality (CODHHE) is to unite, in one Council, advocates and state agency policymakers to ensure the empowerment of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and to increase the knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of the rights of hearing impaired citizens of the State of Delaware.