

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Legislative Hearing on
“Keeping Kids and Consumers Safe from Dangerous Products”
June 13, 2019

Captain Chris Parsons, President, Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters,
Response to the Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D. (R-TX)

1. Captain Parsons, July 4th is quickly approaching and Americans across the country are already stocking up on fireworks to celebrate our nation's 244th Birthday. While fireworks can be a fun activity for children and adults alike, I have concerns regarding firework injuries and how the CPSC investigates the safety of fireworks.

a. As a firefighter, what do you think is the best way of reducing the likelihood of firework related injuries?

Parsons Response: According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2017, at least eight people lost their lives in fireworks mishaps and nearly 13,000 people visited a hospital for care of fireworks-related injuries. More than two-thirds of the injuries occurring from the use of consumer-grade fireworks result in wounds or burns to the head, face, eyes, ears, or hands. Sadly, children ages 5 to 14 account for the most significant number of fireworks-related injuries. Frankly, there is no safe way to use consumer fireworks. The IAFF supports a total ban on consumer-grade fireworks. Fireworks displays should only be conducted by trained pyrotechnic professionals. Public displays conducted by pyrotechnic professionals account for less than one percent of all injuries.

b. Have you heard reports about defective firework products?

Parsons Response: Anecdotally, I have heard reports indicating that up to one-third of the fireworks imported into the United States are defective. I understand the American Pyrotechnics Association in partnership with the American Fireworks Standards laboratory is engaged in testing fireworks. These organizations have identified a significant number of defective fireworks are originating from China.

c. What is the CPSC's process to evaluate the safe use of consumer-grade fireworks?

Parsons Response: I do not have any insight into the process CPSC uses to evaluate consumer-grade fireworks.

d. If Americans are injured by imported fireworks, does the CPSC make any review of how it conducts inspections and clearances of products?

Parsons Response: As stated above, I do not have any insight in to how the CPSC conducts inspections or clears products for use in the United States. However, anecdotally I am aware the CPSC is partnering with the US Customs and Border Protection to carry out selective enforcement activities to prevent unapproved fireworks from entering the United States through our shipping ports. However, given the massive amount of consumer products coming through this method, it is highly likely unapproved fireworks are finding their way to the American consumer.