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Convener
Criminal Justice Committee
Scottish Parliament
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By email: justicecommittee@parliament.scot

3 November 2023

Dear Convener,

Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022: Part 5 – Pyrotechnic Possession Offences – Awareness Raising

On 3 May 2023 the Committee considered evidence on the secondary legislation required to commence the Part 5 provisions of the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022. Committee members were interested in the Scottish Government's plans to raise awareness and understanding of the new pyrotechnic possession offences and the risks of pyrotechnic misuse.

I am pleased to confirm that as part of our ongoing commitment to raise awareness of the pyrotechnic provisions my officials have been working closely with partners, including Police Scotland, to develop communication materials that will be made available online on 6 November 2023. These consist of a factsheet along with other downloadable content to be shared online and across social media, highlighting the dangers of pyrotechnic misuse at events. These materials also reiterate the need for the new legislation and will be freely available to all, and of particular use to those facilitating events as they work to eliminate pyrotechnic misuse. I include copies of these materials for the Committee's interest.

I hope that the Committee find this information helpful. I will continue to keep you updated as this work continues.

SIOBHIAN BROWN

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It is a criminal offence in Scotland to carry pyrotechnics in public places



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Setting off pyrotechnics in a crowd is dangerous and puts the lives of everyone at risk



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Don't be the person who ruins the event for others,
pyrotechnics can be fatal
when set off in a crowded place



Pyrotechnics can cause severe burns, reaching temperatures of over 2,000°C



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Pyrotechnics

Summary Sheet

Background information:



The misuse of pyrotechnics is dangerous and can cause serious, even fatal injury.

To tackle this, new legislation making it a criminal offence to carry pyrotechnics, for example, flares and fireworks, in public places, including at sporting and live music events, is now in force in Scotland.

This allows police to search and remove pyrotechnics from people who are carrying them without a reasonable excuse.

Those found to be breaking the new laws could face a fine up to £5,000, a prison sentence of up to 6 months – or both.

This is to help make sure no one is put at risk of harm as a result of firework or pyrotechnic misuse.



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Key Messages

Overarching Message:

Pyrotechnic misuse can cause serious, even fatal, injury.

Safety:

- Setting off pyrotechnics in a crowd is dangerous and puts the lives of everyone at risk.
- Pyrotechnics can cause severe burns, reaching temperatures of over 2,000°C.
- Misuse of pyrotechnics at public events can have devastating, life-changing results including severe burns from fire or chemicals, loss of limbs or fingers, loss of hearing and sight, or death.
- The smoke and chemicals released from pyrotechnics can cause breathing difficulties, particularly for children, and for those with respiratory conditions, such as asthma.
- Once let off, pyrotechnics will burn out until done and cannot be extinguished easily. They can also remain dangerously hot for some time after and, if not fully burnt out, can be at risk of explosion, putting everyone at risk - especially children, who may be tempted to pick up any pyrotechnics they see on the ground.
- If you see a pyrotechnic lying on the ground, do not pick it up. Instead, alert an event official such as security.



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Key Messages

Impact of Pyro Misuse:

- Pyrotechnic misuse at events can cause distress and alarm to those around you.
- Unexpected noise and light from pyrotechnic misuse can cause extreme anxiety and stress, causing particularly problems for some people with sensory issues.
- Loud bangs and lights from pyrotechnics can adversely affect those with epilepsy, potentially triggering a seizure.
- Noise and smoke from pyrotechnics can also cause crowd panic and the potential for dangerous, even deadly, crowd surge.

The Law:

- It is a criminal offence in Scotland to carry pyrotechnics in public places, including at sporting and live music events.
- Those found to be in possession of pyrotechnics can face a fine up to £5,000, a prison sentence of up to 6 months – or both.

Events are for Everyone:

- Don't be the person who ruins the event for others, be considerate of your fellow sports fan and music lover.
- There is no such thing as a safe pyrotechnic when it is misused.
- They can cause damage to venues, and obstruct views, spoiling the occasion for everyone around you.



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