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### **Safety Warning**

#### **Sale and Distribution of Pyrotechnics by Entertainment Organisers**

There have been recent reported incidents where some entertainment organisers have illegally imported and/or sold and distributed pyrotechnics for use at private parties or public events.

Pyrotechnic articles such as gerbs, fountains (or any other fireworks) are explosives. As such, they are regulated under the Explosives Act. An import licence is required from the Department of Justice to import any pyrotechnics into the State, and there are also strict regulations regarding the storage, possession and sale of pyrotechnics. Current Government policy is to grant import licenses (for pyrotechnics) to professional operators for specific organised displays only. Such operators are required to carry out a site specific risk assessment, and to consult with fire authorities, Gardai and other interested parties and authorities.

It should be remembered that some horrific accidents have occurred in situations where unlicensed fireworks were used by untrained personnel (e.g. in February 2003 in Rhode Island, USA, where 96 people died in a disco fire caused by stage gerbs set off by the band manager, or at a nightclub in Buenos Aires in December 2004, where 194 people died after a pyrotechnic flare, set off by a patron, set fire to a ceiling).

Apart from the obvious danger of selling fireworks to untrained personnel, it should also be noted that the possession for sale of unlicensed fireworks is a criminal offence which carries (on indictment) a fine of up to €10,000 or 5 years imprisonment or both and it is also an offence to import or store any explosive without a license.

Entertainment companies or event organisers who wish to have pyrotechnics as part of their entertainment event plan, should deal only with professional operators, and ensure that only licensed fireworks (or other licensed pyrotechnics), which are properly classified, are used.

Further information may be obtained from the "Guidance Document for Organised Pyrotechnic Displays" which is available from the Department of Justice website at [www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)