



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

Firework Safety Campaign 2002

This year's DTI's national firework safety campaign will once again be targeting children and young people.

TV adverts will be broadcast nationwide in the run up to November 5 and there will also be posters on display that show just how dangerous it can be to mess around with fireworks. You can run a successful campaign in your area by building on this material and using the ideas and tips contained in this leaflet.

The DTI is also distributing over 25,000 Schools' Packs to primary and secondary schools across England, Scotland and Wales. These are designed to promote the firework safety message in the context of study sheets, which fit into the National Curriculum Key Stages 1-3 and Level A-E in Scotland. So why not speak to schools in your area to see if they are involved and if you can work together to reach the local media.

The DTI has joined forces with the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT), which is targeting its efforts towards pre-school groups. Parents, playgroup leaders and teachers may all be able to give some input to a positive safety story, so why not see if your LEA is taking part?



Fireworks are explosives
GET WISE OR GET HURT

Ideas from around the Country

Here are a few examples of how people have made the most of the media in previous campaigns:

"We used information pulled from the tool kit to issue informative press releases to the local media."

MR DAVID TURNBULL, PRESS OFFICE, DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE.

"We put together a media pack to accompany press releases and distributed leaflets and posters."

MRS SAMANTHA WICKLIN, SENIOR TRADING STANDARDS OFFICER, BLAENAU GWENT.

"We made a video to complement the excellent tool kit and used our good rapport with the media to target all secondary schools in the area."

MR RAY McDONNELL, COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY OFFICER, CAMBRIDGE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE.

Top Tips for a Successful Campaign

If you can come up with local angles for your firework safety campaign, your local media will give you coverage. This could be anything from a local safety initiative to an amusing photocall opportunity.

Some of the following PR ideas have worked in the past on other campaigns. Please feel free to adapt these approaches or come up with something similar to create media interest in your local firework safety campaign for 5th November.

Forming a working party of interested bodies, including Trading Standards, Fire Brigade, Police, Local Education Authority and PR professionals, is a good way of coordinating a programme of activity because you can allocate responsibilities and, if possible, appoint a lead media spokesperson.

1. Identify people who have an interesting story to tell the media about fireworks. This could be someone from Trading Standards who has been involved in a large test purchasing exercise, a firefighter who has witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of a fireworks injury, or someone who has been injured by a firework.
2. Recruit a local celebrity, such as an actor, musician, or footballer, who would be prepared to visit some local schools to talk about firework safety. This will be fun for the children and good PR for the campaign.
3. Arrange a photocall with someone who works closely with children or young people and could promote the message about the dangers of misusing fireworks. This could be a surgeon who has operated on a firework injury victim or the parent of an injured child.
4. If your Trading Standards Department arranges tests of dubious fireworks, invite the media to a demonstration.
5. Arrange a photocall with the Fire Brigade to demonstrate how easily accidents involving fireworks can happen. For example, dress up an old dummy and show how quickly clothes can catch fire.
6. Ask the editor of your local newspaper or civic newspaper to arrange a competition, such as designing firework safety posters. Offer prizes to the winners and arrange a photocall to show off some of the designs.
7. Try to get your local radio station and well-known DJs, such as people who do breakfast shows, to back the campaign by giving out safety messages on air or by interviewing people involved in firework safety, such as firefighters.
8. If you have a football or rugby club in your area, ask if they could put up firework safety messages in the ground or in the match day programme closest to 5th November.

Counting the Cost

The media likes using statistics to show how last year's local firework injuries relate to the national picture, by using the accident statistics contained in the pack. If a particular area had the highest number of injuries, for example, this could lead to a local newspaper running its own campaign to cut down on the number of people hurt.

Extra help is available

There are plenty of other ways of getting publicity for firework safety without expending enormous effort or resources. Let us know how you get on so that good ideas can be passed on for next year – see the evaluation sheet enclosed.

For extra help and advice on your local campaign efforts please don't hesitate to contact your regional office of the Government News Network (GNN), which will be fully briefed on the campaign.

If you are giving interviews to local newspapers or radio stations, you might also find the information in the Speaking Notes fact sheet helpful.

A Reminder on the Law

Are your local enforcement agencies planning any special efforts to police the strengthened law on fireworks, e.g. test purchasing? The minimum age for firework sales is 18 and it is illegal to sell bangers and mini-rockets to the public. Packets of sparklers carry a parental warning, "Warning: not to be given to children under 5 years of age".

Despite changes to the law, firework accident statistics show that every year over half the injuries caused by fireworks are to school children under 16, even though the law prohibits the sale of fireworks to them.

Fireworks and alcohol don't mix

Please remember to include this very important firework safety message when dealing with the media. Just as children aged 16 and under still buy fireworks despite being underage, they also have access to alcohol and this can be a lethal combination!

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