



# Saturday Night [under the] Lights... 2015



*Happy Saturday.*

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Mixed bag for EMS, right? For us it means double the opportunity for our communities to meet us in person (you get the picture). I hope many of you get some off-time to spend with friends and family. For those of you holding down the fort, thanks for keeping us safe and taking good care of those that need us tonight...

On a serious note, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is unfortunately filled with significant risk medically (our law enforcement colleagues see a sizeable bump as well).

Take a look at the facts (data courtesy of a study done last year by the Consumer Product Safety Commission):

- In 2014, 10,500 people were treated in an ED for fireworks related injury
- About 2/3 of those patients (almost 230 a day) are seen in the month surrounding the 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday
- 9 people died last year (in 8 incidents and 2 were not users)
- Most injured part (by far)? Hands & fingers (36%)
- Second highest risk – Eye injuries (19%)
- 34% of injured patients were between 25-44 (“hey kids, hold my beer – watch this”)
- Sadly, 9% were between the ages of 0-4 and 23% were teenagers
- Surprisingly, 4% were injured during public displays (“honey, of course it’s safe – they wouldn’t do it if it wasn’t”)

- And (here comes a real shocker) - males were more likely to be injured by reloadable shells than females... I would have never guessed.

But here's perhaps the most deadly statistic – According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the Fourth of July is the worst day of the year for fatal car crashes. And, the National Highway Traffic Safety Association reports that 40 percent of all highway deaths between 2007 and 2011 were caused by drunk driving over the Fourth of July weekend.

Clearly, it's a really high risk holiday.

But that's not all. There's another medical challenge with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July that you may not know.

It's our pets. Our animal companions...

July 5 is the busiest day of the year at animal shelters. Many animals get really spooked by the sounds of fireworks. Sometimes, they'll flee from home in fright or jump over higher fences, break leashes or chains or even run through glass doors in fear.

Often, they're found the day after miles from their homes, disoriented and exhausted. It's a significant concern. It's vitally important to take care of them and make sure they're safe and comfortable tonight.

A few other facts about July 4<sup>th</sup> while we're at it:

- It's the busiest day of the year for Firefighters
- It's the busiest day of the year for boating (as an aside, according to the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the 4th of July, along with Memorial Day and Labor Day, typically account for more than one third of all boating related accidents and fatalities).

And finally – Here are a few facts I found while reviewing the 4<sup>th</sup> of July statistics that have absolutely nothing to do with the 4<sup>th</sup>, but may be of value when you need something of interest to talk about:

- Busiest day of the year at Disney? New Year's Eve.
- Busiest day at KFC? Mother's Day ("you must be so proud of your son, Mrs. Miller"...)
- Busiest day at Applebee's? Valentine's Day ("I love you too, honey – are you going to eat those cheese fries"?)
- Busiest day for Chinese restaurants? Christmas Day (try the Turkey Fried Rice)

- And finally, the one that smart medical people will figure out immediately. The busiest day of the year for plumbers? The day after Thanksgiving.

Yikes. I'll leave you to ponder that visual – No more statistics.

Like many holidays, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is fun to celebrate and it gives a chance to pause and remember what we should be thankful for. Our independence has never come easily.

Our communities are fortunate that we are there to help keep them as safe as possible while they enjoy the festivities and celebrate. I've said this many times before, but there's a certain feeling of pride when you think about what we do. This 4<sup>th</sup> of July in particular has a bit more tension associated with it given all the concerns of terror activity and the possibilities of an event targeting a holiday that celebrates freedom.

What you do helps others live their lives even in the face of those that want to create a sense of fear.

Be very proud of that.

### Epilogue...

A Jewish Rabbi and a Catholic Priest met at the annual 4th of July picnic. Old friends, they began their usual banter.

'This baked ham is really delicious,' the priest teased the rabbi. 'You really ought to try it. I know it's against your religion, but I can't understand why such a wonderful food should be forbidden. You don't know what you're missing. You just haven't lived until you've tried Mrs Warren's prized Virginia Baked Ham. Tell me, Rabbi, when are you going to break down and try it?'

The rabbi looked at the priest with a big grin, and said, 'At your wedding.'

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That's it from my world. *Happy Fourth of July.*

I wish for all of you a safe and secure night tonight. Stay on your toes, remember the importance of personal protection and leave the music on at home for your pets to enjoy so they don't hear the fireworks...

*Ed*

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