



Office for Product
Safety & Standards

Open consultation

Fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK

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Ministerial Foreword

Fireworks play an important role in many public celebrations, community events and personal milestones, and are enjoyed responsibly by millions of people each year. However, I recognise that views on their use vary considerably. Many people have expressed serious concerns about the noise, safety risks and distress that fireworks can cause, and these concerns have driven an unprecedented level of public campaigning for change.

In response, the Government has undertaken a programme of work to improve the safe and considerate use of fireworks. This has included an annual public awareness campaign to educate everyone on the safe and considerate use of fireworks during the fireworks season. Guidance specifically for those community groups running displays was published in October 2025, and a roundtable held with retailers and trade associations in July 2025.

While these measures have helped to raise awareness and promote the safe use of fireworks, we recognise that they have not fully addressed the concerns many people continue to raise. Representations to Government have increased significantly, including petitions and Private Members' Bills calling for legislative change.

I have also heard directly from many individuals who have shared the impact fireworks have had on them, their families, their animals, and their wider communities. I am grateful to them for taking the time to set out their concerns. Their experiences provide important evidence and personal insight, alongside information provided by local authorities, emergency services, animal welfare organisations and representatives of the fireworks industry.

This consultation paper therefore proposes reforms to fireworks legislation, focused on their key harms associated with their misuse – their noise, and contribution to antisocial behaviour – whilst still allowing individuals to enjoy fireworks safely and responsibly for the important community and cultural celebrations they play a part of.

The Government is running this consultation to ensure it hears from a wide range of people as it develops these proposals, making sure that it keeps public safety, and the impact on people, animals and property, central to this work. Please be assured that all perspectives and evidence will be considered carefully.

Introduction

Fireworks are enjoyed by many for celebrations and cultural events. However, their use has become a growing concern, as seen from public complaints, parliamentary debates, and petitions calling for stronger controls due to the negative impacts on neighbourhood safety, vulnerable people, and animals. Recent polling by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) found that 91 percent of respondents supported regulatory change^[footnote 1]. Conversely, concerns have also been raised about the regulatory requirements for lower risk fireworks and pyrotechnics products, such as Christmas crackers.

This consultation explores these issues, in support of the UK Government's Safer Streets Mission ^[footnote 2] to tackle anti-social behaviour. The goal is to find an approach that preserves the enjoyment of fireworks for celebrations while preventing harm and distress to others.

General information

Why are we consulting

Before making any changes to fireworks regulations, we are seeking views on our proposals to ensure we receive all relevant evidence and perspectives. This will allow us to refine the policy to reduce unintended consequences and maximise the potential benefits. We are seeking views on proposals to:

- restrict the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public, with louder products only available to professional users
- add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned pyrotechnic products set out in regulation 33 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 (as amended) (“the 2015 Regulations”) ^[footnote 3]

- review the regulations for fireworks and pyrotechnic products currently classified as lower risk to better reflect the different levels of risk they pose

Consultation details

Audiences

We want to hear from individuals, businesses and organisations that interact with all aspects of fireworks. While we welcome responses from any interested party, we are particularly keen to hear from:

- consumers and consumer organisations, including those who work with vulnerable individuals or under-represented groups
- accident prevention, public safety and security, and antisocial behaviour prevention organisations, including police, ambulance, security and fire and rescue services
- veterans' organisations
- businesses who sell or import fireworks, trade associations, and retailers who sell only F1 and P1 products
- professional pyrotechnics businesses and 'persons with specialist knowledge' ^{[[footnote 4](#)]}
- community and voluntary organisations who organise fireworks displays
- local authorities, Trading Standards and regional and national regulators that have enforcement duties under product safety and related legislation
- healthcare, including mental health care, organisations and professionals
- the Devolved Governments, and those who have knowledge and experience of fireworks regulation in other countries
- animal charities and animal welfare organisations

Territorial extent

This consultation is seeking views on implementing these changes across all four nations of the UK – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We are interested in gathering evidence on a UK-wide basis and want to hear from the Devolved Governments, charities and members of the public across the UK.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, some elements of pyrotechnics law are devolved, and they have their own legislation on key aspects of fireworks use. The 2015 Regulations apply across the UK, with some modifications for Northern Ireland. Council Directive 2013/29/EU on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the

market of pyrotechnic articles (recast) ^[footnote 5] continues to apply in Northern Ireland, by operation of the Windsor Framework^[footnote 6].

How to respond

You can respond to this consultation

(https://ditresearch.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eg0jcixPsRnv1NY) online.

We encourage responses to be made through this online platform to assist our analysis of the responses.

If you cannot respond online, you may send your response by email to fireworksconsultation@businessandtrade.gov.uk, using the response form

(<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a56266e6d6d5c7e2845c8e7/fireworks-and-pyrotechnics-consultation-response-form.odt>) on this page.

Written responses can also be sent to:

Fireworks – Sectors Policy Team
Office for Product Safety and Standards
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
SW1A 2DY

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome. Wherever possible please avoid including any additional personal data in free-text responses beyond that which has been requested or which you consider it necessary for DBT to be aware of.

Confidentiality and data protection

DBT is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your information. This notice informs you how we collect and process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation when you respond to one of our public consultations, which we publish on GOV.UK.

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You can read the Public consultations privacy notice. We may modify or amend this privacy notice at our discretion at any time. When we make changes to this notice, the last modified date at the top of this page will be updated. Any modification or amendment to this privacy notice will be applied to you and your data as of that revision date. If there are substantive changes to how your personal data is processed, DBT will take reasonable steps to make sure you know.

Information you provide in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

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We are trialling Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions to support the delivery of our functions. In accordance with data protection law and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance, we will not use AI alone to make decisions about you, or to inform decisions about you, unless this has been made expressly clear to you in advance. Any use of AI will be subject to appropriate human oversight.

We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on GOV.UK. The summary will include a list of organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

You can contact our Data Protection Officer (DPO) with any concerns about how we or our services handle your personal information:

Data Protection Officer
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
SW1A 2DY

Email: data.protection@businessandtrade.gov.uk

You can also submit a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: [ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/\)](https://ico.org.uk/)

Tel: 0303 123 1113

You can find out more about your rights as a data subject, and details of how to contact our Data Protection Officer and the ICO in our main privacy notice.

Quality assurance

This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the governments [consultation principles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>). If you have any complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, email: enquiries@businessandtrade.gov.uk.

Background

Current legislation

Fireworks are explosive pyrotechnic articles and are regulated for safety and public order, with restrictions focused on their sale and use. Fireworks are classified into four categories: small indoor items (F1), garden fireworks for outdoor home use (F2), larger display-scale fireworks requiring substantial space (F3), and professional-only fireworks that can only be used by trained operators (F4).

Alongside fireworks, there are other pyrotechnic products that are classified for their safety and use. P1 products include novelty items like smoke bombs and must not be sold to anyone under the age of 18. P2 products include those used for industrial purposes, like airbags, and can only be supplied to those with specialist knowledge^[footnote 7]. Further information on the classification of pyrotechnics and fireworks can be found in [Annex A](#).

Anyone storing more than 5kg of fireworks must be licensed^[footnote 8]. Those premises which are only licensed for storage are permitted to sell F2 and F3 fireworks during traditional festival periods (e.g. the days around Bonfire Night, Diwali, Chinese New Year, and New Year's Eve), and F1 products year-round. Retailers must obtain an additional selling licence to sell F2 and F3 fireworks year-round^[footnote 9].

Use of fireworks late at night is curfewed (generally no use after 11pm, with exceptions on specific celebrations) and they cannot be set off in public places without permission. F4 fireworks, which have the most powerful explosive content, may only be made available to those with 'specialist knowledge', the term mainly applied to fireworks professionals. Certain especially high risk or nuisance fireworks are banned from sale to the general public but can be supplied to professionals.

Use of fireworks

Industry figures suggest around 20 million people take part in fireworks activities at home each year. Research commissioned by OPSS in 2021 found almost two thirds (61 percent) of those surveyed said they personally enjoy fireworks, and almost half (45 percent) said they had attended an organised public or private display within the last year^[footnote 10].

Between 2021 and 2024, an average of £27m worth of fireworks were imported into the UK per year, with over 95 percent coming from China^[footnote 11]. In 2025, there were approximately 51 UK businesses importing fireworks^[footnote 12]. An estimate in 2020 from the British Pyrotechnists Association (BPA) put the annual turnover on displays organised by professionals in the UK at approximately £13.4 million^[footnote 13].

Public safety risks and disorder

While notifications received from market surveillance authorities ^[footnote 14] regarding the safety of pyrotechnics are rare, especially in relation to other consumer products, fireworks and pyrotechnics carry a safety risk of injury

and fire when misused and can pose significant safety hazards in communities.

Research from the Home Office in 2022 found more than 3,000 fires over the last 12 years had been caused by fireworks^[footnote 15]. Disruptive, anti-social and criminal misuse is seen around Halloween and Bonfire Night, and increasingly throughout the year. In some areas, those working in the police and fire service have faced attacks by assailants armed with fireworks. There are frequent reports of other pyrotechnic products, such as smoke bombs and flares, being used inside and around football stadiums. However, the list of fireworks prohibited on public safety grounds has remained unchanged for over a decade.

Polling undertaken by OPSS in both 2021 and 2025 shows that public feeling towards fireworks is strengthening. Whilst the polling shows that fireworks, and in particular public display fireworks, remain consistently popular, the negative impacts from fireworks are becoming more widespread. In 2021, OPSS research found that 55 percent of respondents said private fireworks displays disturb the peace and quiet in their area^[footnote 16]. In 2025, 71 percent of respondents said their dislike of fireworks noise came from the disturbance to peace and quiet^[footnote 1]. In 2021, 20 percent reported having experienced anti-social behaviour relating to fireworks. But, in 2025, over half of respondents had personally witnessed fireworks being set off in a public place or after 1am, both of which are criminal offences^[footnote 1].

The proposals in the consultation aim to address these issues and minimise the risk of a black market emerging. However, we are particularly interested in hearing from industry and local authorities and Trading Standards about our proposals in light of these concerns.

The Government has recently consulted on proposals to introduce new requirements to modernise and clarify the responsibilities of online marketplaces in relation to product safety. We expect these proposals to also address concerns regarding the online sales of pyrotechnics.

[Read the product safety framework consultation.](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/product-regulation-the-uks-new-product-safety-framework)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/product-regulation-the-uks-new-product-safety-framework>

The proposed changes to pyrotechnics regulation

Section 1 – Updating the banned list and reviewing the regulation of F1 and P2 products

We do not consider banning the public from buying or using fireworks to be a proportionate response to the current situation. Instead, we are proposing to reassess the risk level of certain pyrotechnic products, which could lead to more restricted access to some products.

UK legislation already bans especially dangerous products from general sale. These pyrotechnic articles are set out in regulation 33 of the 2015 Regulations. The list currently includes aerial bangers, jumping ground spinners and jumping crackers. However, these products can still be supplied to ‘persons with specialist knowledge’. These are people who have undertaken specialist training recognised in the fireworks business and have valid liability insurance, or those who are in the business of supplying, using or testing the safety of F4 fireworks or P2 and T2 pyrotechnics^[footnote 17].

Recently, there have been instances where particular pyrotechnics have been linked to anti-social behaviour or have been used as weapons against emergency services or members of the public, ^[footnote 18] and some communities have felt under attack around Bonfire Night and Halloween^[footnote 19]. The Sports Ground Safety Authority note that Rockets and Roman Candles have been used as weapons at football matches, fired from one side of the stadium to the opposing crowd on the other side, as well as being fired directly at players and officials on the pitch^[footnote 20]. More generally, explosives from fireworks can be used to construct improvised explosive devices using widely available technology and detonated to lethal effect, as seen in the Boston Marathon terror attack^[footnote 21].

F1 fireworks and P1 pyrotechnics products are considered the lowest risk, and in the case of Christmas crackers, have a lower-age restriction than all other fireworks products. These types of products are also cheaper, making them particularly accessible. However, there have been incidents of P1 smoke bombs causing panic and distress at public events, and reports that indoor fireworks have been involved in incidents leading to significant loss of life^[footnote 22].

Proposal 1 – updating the banned list of F2 and F3 fireworks

We are seeking views on the safety and security risks from fireworks, including views on particular F2 and F3 products. We intend to add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned products set out in regulation 33 of the 2015 Regulations. Products listed in regulation 33 will still be available to those with specialist knowledge to

purchase (i.e. professional users). We also intend to clarify in the 2015 regulations that fireworks comprising of multiple shot tubes are banned.

Consultation questions

Question 1: Are there any other particular F2 and F3 fireworks products that you think the general public should not be allowed to buy? Please state which products and give your reasons.

Question 2: If more products are added to the regulation 33 banned list, what consequences might there be for consumers, industry, enforcement authorities, professional users, and others? Please give your reasons.

Question 3: Do you agree that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is banned from sale to the general public?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

Please give your reasons.

Proposal 2 – reviewing the regulations on F1 and P1 products so they are proportionate and effective

F1s and P1s are the lowest risk categories of explosive products, covering a wide range of products including party poppers, Christmas crackers, small indoor fountains, smoke bombs and other novelty smoke and spark devices, all designed to produce minimal noise and light effects. Given their explosive content, they still have controls on their use. P1s must not be sold to anyone under the age of 18. F1s must not be sold to anyone under 16 years of age^[footnote 23]. The one exception to this is Christmas crackers, which are classed as an F1 firework and have a minimum buying age of 12. They have a low risk of harm and can be used safely by children under supervision.

Christmas crackers

Given the comparatively low risk level of Christmas crackers, even compared to other products in the same F1 category, we are proposing to

remove the age restriction on purchase. This would remove the need for age checks which retailers have raised as a disproportionate burden.

Adopting this proposal in some or all countries across the UK may have Internal Market implications as the EU age limit of 12 years old applies in Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework. We are particularly interested in hearing views from businesses across the UK on how removal of the age limit may affect retailers and businesses involved in all stages of the supply chain.

Other F1 or P1 products

We also want to gather views on whether the requirements relating to any other specific F1 or P1 pyrotechnics should either be increased or decreased. As noted earlier, some products such as smoke bombs have been reported as causing particular issues, and indoor pyrotechnics may pose particular risks depending on their use.

Consultation questions

Question 4: Do you agree that the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers should be removed?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

Please give your reasons.

Question 5: Are there any other specific F1 and P1 pyrotechnics that should have their regulatory requirements increased or decreased? Please state which products, what regulatory requirements you think they should have and give your reasons.

Section 2 – Reducing noise impacts

Allowing the celebration of traditional and cultural events whilst reducing the noise of fireworks has been a particularly strong and consistent theme raised by stakeholders, members of the public and Parliamentarians. Polling undertaken by OPSS in December 2025 found that when respondents were asked what they disliked about fireworks noise, 91 percent cited the noise effects on animals, 71 percent cited the noise effects on the peace and quiet

of their community, and 68 percent cited the noise effects on vulnerable people^[footnote 1]. Even at levels at which temporary or permanent hearing loss is not a risk, noise can have other effects on the health and wellbeing of humans and animals^[footnote 24]. These impacts include distress for individuals with noise sensitivity (such as those with autism, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other conditions). Animals can experience distress and be startled which can lead to injury or even death due to the flight response^[footnote 25].

The current maximum permitted level for F1, F2 and F3 fireworks available to consumers is 120 A weighted decibels, measured using the impulse time weighting (dB (A,imp)) at safety distances for different firework categories^[footnote 25]. Research commissioned by OPSS and conducted by the Health and Safety Executive in 2023 found that, across 72 different fireworks products tested, the vast majority were compliant with the maximum limit. Products marketed as 'lower noise' fireworks are readily available for consumers to purchase but to date, their popularity has been unclear, with retailers reporting different sales results.

In 2008 New Zealand introduced a 90 decibel limit for their consumer fireworks, along with reducing the number of days they can be sold and raising the legal age of purchase from 14 to 18 (to match that of most other countries, including the UK). New Zealand continues to import consumer fireworks for its domestic market. However, there have been concerns that the change has led to gaming of the fireworks noise testing system due to the challenges of effectively defining a 90 decibel limit in legislation^[footnote 27].

Adding to the complexity of assessing fireworks noise levels is the many factors that can impact the experience of hearing sound such as the natural environment, wind direction or physical structure, along with psychological elements such as whether the noise is expected or predictable^[footnote 28].

Further information on noise measurement can be found in [Annex A](#).

Proposal 3 – reducing fireworks noise

We are seeking views on restricting the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public (category F1, F2 and F3). We propose reducing the perceived noise of consumer fireworks by approximately 50 percent. As the dB scale is logarithmic, this 50 percent reduction would be achieved by moving the permitted decibel level down from 120 to 110 dB (A,imp)^[footnote 29].

This would make a significant reduction in perceived noise of consumer fireworks but with a lesser impact on businesses and the products available for consumers to enjoy responsibly. We estimate it would impact around one-third of current fireworks products available to consumers^[footnote 28]. We understand that many campaigns and petitions have called for greater

change, so we are keen to gather views and further evidence on the impacts of a change to 100 or 90 dBA weighted decibels (dBA_{imp}).

Taking the noisiest fireworks off the market for consumers could result in the market for lower noise fireworks growing; boosting innovation and sales of low noise products, possibly creating a new niche where UK companies could excel. We believe this change will ensure those fireworks displays people choose to undertake in their own gardens or community spaces will be less disruptive and anti-social to people and animals.

We intend to allow professional public displays to continue to use fireworks with loud effects, because these events are publicised and far less likely to take place illegally or during unsociable hours^[footnote 30].

Consultation questions

Question 6: Do you agree the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered? Choose one of the following options:

- No, the maximum noise limit for fireworks should remain at 120 dB (A_{imp})
- Yes, to 110 dB (A_{imp}) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately half)
- Yes, to 100 dB (A_{imp}) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately three-quarters)
- Yes, to 90 dB (A_{imp}) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately seven-eighths)
- Don't know

Question 7: What might be the positive impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Question 8: What might be the negative impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Section 3 – Lead-in periods

We intend to make changes to pyrotechnics and fireworks regulations as soon as parliamentary time allows, having fully assessed the responses to this consultation and any other evidence we receive. We are committed to proactively manage any transition periods in partnership with the industry, including conformity assessment bodies, professional pyrotechnicians, importers and retailers to minimise costs and disruption to supply chains. We will ensure any proposals that are enacted have a sufficient lead-in time for the industry to adjust their stock.

We propose a 6-month transitional period for any proposals taken forward from the point of when the law is changed.

Consultation questions

Question 9: How much lead in time would businesses need to prepare for the changes proposed in this consultation and why? Please state a lead in time in months or years, and explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Question 10: What other things should we consider when setting a lead in time? You may wish to reference the impact on people who buy fireworks, enforcement bodies, police or the general public.

Summary of proposals

We are consulting on proposals to:

- restrict the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public, with louder products only available to professional users
- add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned pyrotechnic products
- review the regulations for fireworks and pyrotechnic products currently classified as lower risk to better reflect the different levels of risk they pose

Consolidated list of consultation questions

Question 1: Are there any other particular F2 and F3 fireworks products that you think the general public should not be allowed to buy? Please state which products and give your reasons.

Question 2: If more products are added to the regulation 33 banned list, what consequences might there be for consumers, industry, enforcement authorities, professional users, and others? Please give your reasons.

Question 3: Do you agree that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is banned from sale to the general public?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

****Please give your reasons.**

Question 4: Do you agree that the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers should be removed?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

Please give your reasons.

Question 5: Are there any other specific F1 and P1 pyrotechnics that should have their regulatory requirements increased or

decreased? Please state which products, what regulatory requirements you think they should have and give your reasons.

Question 6: Do you agree the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered? Choose one of the following options:

- No, the maximum noise limit for fireworks should remain at 120 dB (A,imp)
- Yes, to 110 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately half)
- Yes, to 100 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately three-quarters)
- Yes, to 90 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately seven-eighths)
- Don't know

Question 7: What might be the positive impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Question 8: What might be the negative impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Question 9: How much lead in time would businesses need to prepare for the changes proposed in this consultation and why? Please state a lead in time in months or years, and explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Question 10: What other things should we consider when setting a lead in time? You may wish to reference the impact on people who buy fireworks, enforcement bodies, police or the general public.

If you have any additional evidence that you would like to share with the Government, please submit this alongside your response to the consultation.

Next steps

This consultation will remain open for 12 weeks, until Wednesday 7 October 2026. After the consultation closes, the Department for Business and Trade will analyse the feedback, including using AI tools. A summary of responses and the Government's proposed actions will then be published.

Timelines and implementation

Subject to the outcomes of this consultation and securing Parliamentary approval, the Government will seek to lay a Statutory Instrument to amend the Regulations to implement the proposed changes.

The Government appreciates the time and insight of all respondents. By working together, citizens, charities, industry, and authorities can ensure that celebrations remain joyful and safe for everyone. Thank you for your participation in this consultation.

Annex A – further information about pyrotechnics classifications and fireworks noise impacts

Types of fireworks and pyrotechnics

Pyrotechnics are materials designed to produce controlled effects like light, colour, heat, smoke and sound. Fireworks are a type of pyrotechnic. Fireworks and pyrotechnics are classified according to their safety level, intended user, noise output and explosive content. This determines the places they can be used safely, and who is able to buy and use them. More detail about pyrotechnics and firework types is available in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Table of pyrotechnic and firework types [\[footnote 31\]](#)

Category	Legislation	Noise Pressure Level	Suitability
F1	Fireworks which present a very low hazard and negligible noise level, and which are intended for use in confined areas, including fireworks which are intended for use inside domestic buildings.	Must not exceed 120 dBA _{imp} at an advised standing distance of 1m.	For use by adults and individuals under the age of 18 with supervision. Can be used at close proximity. Some products in this category can be used indoors.
F2	Fireworks which present a low hazard and low noise level, and which are intended for outdoor use in confined areas.	Must not exceed 120 dBA _{imp} at an advised standing distance of 8m.	For use by adults only. Suitable for use in private gardens (subject to appropriate space).
F3	Fireworks which present a medium hazard, which are intended for outdoor use in large open areas and whose noise level is not harmful to human health.	Must not exceed 120 dBA _{imp} at an advised standing distance of 25m.	For use by adults only. Suitable for use in large open spaces, such in the grounds of a local sports club (subject to appropriate space).
F4	Fireworks which present a high hazard, which are intended for use only by 'persons with specialist knowledge' and whose noise level is not harmful to human health.	No limit but the noise level must not be harmful to human health.	For use by persons with specialist knowledge. Often used for large public displays, such as those organised by Local Authorities or entertainment venues.

Category	Legislation	Noise Pressure Level	Suitability
P1	Pyrotechnic articles, other than fireworks and theatrical pyrotechnic articles, which present a low hazard.	The pyrotechnic article must be designed in such a way as to minimise risk to health, property and the environment from debris when initiated inadvertently.	For use by adults only. Products include coloured smoke bombs.
P2	Pyrotechnic articles, other than fireworks and theatrical pyrotechnic articles, which are intended for handling or use only by persons with specialist knowledge.	The pyrotechnic article must be designed in such a way as to minimise risk to health, and requires appropriate storage facilities and insurance coverage.	For use by persons with specialist knowledge. Products include bird scarers and vehicle safety devices.

What is fireworks noise?

The visual and audial effects of fireworks are produced from the different chemicals (metals, metal salts and oxidisers) being combined together to produce different explosive pyrotechnic compositions. Different compositions produce the effects we experience, such as light, colour, smoke and sound.

Fireworks are manufactured with consistent chemical compositions to meet the required safety standards for each fireworks type (for example, there is a standard chemical composition for making a sparkler, and another for making a rocket). This ensures each firework type makes a consistent sound. However, testing also shows that a person's experience of the noise of a firework can differ depending on factors such as the weather conditions of the day, humidity, and proximity to buildings or walls that the noise bounces off^[footnote 32]. It is the combination of the chemical composition of the product with these physical and environmental conditions that produce the noise of fireworks that we experience.

Research conducted by the Health and Safety Executive for OPSS shows that it is not possible to use the existing regulatory categories of fireworks (F1, F2, F3) to group fireworks into those which are more noisy or less noisy. This is because noise effects are wide ranging across the different fireworks types within each category. For example, testing showed F2 fireworks produce noise levels ranging from 70 dBA to 120 dBA^[footnote 33]. F3 fireworks ranged from 75 to 120 dBA. We therefore are not proposing to restrict the use of all F2 or F3 category fireworks for consumers, as there are lower noise options in both of these categories. Focussing on the permitted noise level across product categories will allow us to target the fireworks that cause the most noise, whilst ensuring other fireworks in any category under this limit can still be purchased by the general public and enjoyed.

Noise measurement

There are different ways to measure noise to best suit the type of noise and how it is perceived. These different methods are often expressed in different sound level metrics, which usually have the same unit, the decibel (dB). Comparing different decibel metrics is as misleading as comparing apples and oranges.

Consumer fireworks in the UK have their current maximum noise level set out in the 2015 Regulations. This is expressed as an A-weighted impulse sound pressure level (LAImax dB or dB (A, imp)). This can be broken down into its parts:

L = Level. This is to introduce the number given as being about a sound level.

A = A-weighting. This means the measurement has deemphasised the parts of the sound humans hear less well (very low and very high frequencies) and emphasised the range where our ears are most sensitive (roughly 1–5 kHz). Because of this, A-weighted measurements tend to not express the full spectrum of the sound experienced.

Other types of weightings include Z or Lin, short for linear, where no adjustment is made to account for human hearing, or C-weighting, which gives more emphasis to low frequency sound.

I = Impulse time weighting. ‘Impulse’, which can be written as I, imp or imp, is used for sounds that rise and fall extremely quickly. The meter uses a special setting to catch that moment.

Time weightings can be ‘Slow’, ‘Fast’ or ‘Impulse’, and they control how quickly a sound level meter reacts to changes in sound. It doesn’t change

the true sound – it changes how fast the number on the meter moves. Slow time weighting results in a very smoothed out signal, while Fast weighting retains more of the quick changes in sound level. The type of weighting used affects the maximum level in the measurement.

max = Maximum. The maximum value of a signal smoothed by time weighting.

Other ways of expressing sound level as a single number include 'equivalent continuous sound level' (expressed as 'eq'), where, over a period of time, all the peaks and quiet periods are entirely smoothed out into one number; and Peak, where no smoothing or averaging is applied, and the highest instantaneous pressure spike in the sound is recorded.

dB = decibel. A unit used to measure the intensity of a sound. A decibel tells you how big one value is compared to another, using a logarithmic scale so that extremely big differences (like the sound of a whisper versus a jet engine) can be expressed with manageable numbers.

A 10 dB reduction in sound level results in a sound which is perceived as approximately half as loud. This means that a steady source emitting 110 decibels is approximately half of the perceived loudness of a source emitting 120 decibels. A steady source emitting 100 decibels is approximately one quarter of the perceived loudness of a source emitting 120 decibels, and a source emitting 90 decibels is approximately one eighth of the perceived loudness of a source emitting 120 decibels.

Currently, UK and European law sets the maximum decibel levels for fireworks noise using A-weighted measurements, and this is reflected in the current product standards used for fireworks. A-weighted measurements are less suited to measuring the type of noise fireworks makes – loud sounds, across both low and high frequencies. However, we consider that keeping this form of measurement will ensure businesses and consumers can continue to know and understand the products in a way that is familiar.

Footnotes

1. Office for Product Safety and Standards (July 2026). Results from the 2025 survey on UK public attitudes, experiences, and behaviours regarding fireworks (<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F6a54c2471228eb26a4cab822%2Ffireworks-dataset.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>)
2. UK Government (2025). Plan for Change: Safer Streets (<https://www.gov.uk/missions/safer-streets>)

3. S.I. 2015 No. 1533 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1553/contents>)
4. Persons with specialist knowledge are defined in Schedule 4 to the 2015 Regulations. These are people who have undertaken specialist training recognised in the fireworks business and have valid liability insurance, or those who are in the business of supplying, using or testing the safety of F4 fireworks or P2 and T2 pyrotechnics.
5. European Commission (2013). Directive 2013/29/EU (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0029>) Of The European Parliament and of The Council on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of pyrotechnic articles.
6. See paragraph 12 of Annex 2 to the Joint Declaration No 1/2023 of the Union and the United Kingdom in the Joint Committee Established by the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community of 24 March 2023, L 102/87, 17 April 2023.
7. See regulation 32 of the 2015 Regulations.
8. See regulation 7 of the Explosives Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014 No. 1638).
9. See regulation 9 of the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004 No. 1836).
10. Office for Product Safety and Standards (April 2021). Consumer behaviours and attitudes to fireworks (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-behaviours-and-attitudes-to-fireworks-in-the-uk>)
11. HM Revenue and Customs (dataset, accessed 2026). Overseas Trade Data (<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table/?id=d2e53714-fc1e-4ef8-a943-53655f8d4e11>)
12. HM Revenue and Customs (dataset, accessed 2026). Trader Search (<https://www.uktradeinfo.com/search/traders/?q=36041000&t=Traders%3A%3Acommodity-code&traders=Importers&year=2025>)
13. British Pyrotechnics Association (2020) Fireworks Evidence: Submission from British Pyrotechnics Association (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929118/fireworks-evidence-submission-bpa.pdf)
14. The notification system used by local authority trading standards (environmental health in Northern Ireland), certain national regulators and Office for Products Standards and Safety enforcement teams to notify unsafe and non-compliant products to the Secretary of State.
15. Home Office (2022). Primary fires caused by fireworks, 2010-11 to 2021-22 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/primary-fires-caused-by-fireworks-2010-11-to-2021-22>)

16. Office for Product Safety and Standards (April 2021). Consumer behaviours and attitudes to fireworks (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-behaviours-and-attitudes-to-fireworks-in-the-uk>)
17. See Schedule 4 to the 2015 Regulations.
18. For example, BBC News (2025). Fire crews attacked with fireworks at Huyton flats blaze (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20p4m6r76ro>)
19. For example, BBC News (2025). Bradford residents demand end to 'anti-social' fireworks (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4gl1z1z702o>); BBC News (2025). Police begin fireworks crackdown after violent Bonfire Night attacks (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2pr123e9vo>); Luton Today (2023). Calls for tighter restrictions as Luton residents describe 'anger and resentment' over nuisance fireworks (<https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/people/calls-for-tighter-restrictions-as-luton-residents-describe-anger-and-resentment-over-nuisance-fireworks-4405764>)
20. Sportsground Safety Authority (2024). Pyrotechnics Education Toolkit (<https://sgsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Pyrotechnics-education-toolkit.pdf>)
21. US Attorney's Office (1 May 2013). Three Men Arrested in Connection with Marathon Bombing Investigation (<https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/boston/press-releases/2013/three-men-arrested-in-connection-with-marathon-bombing-investigation>)
22. For example, the BBC reported the Swiss Canton of Valais placed a ban on the use pyrotechnic devices in indoor public places following a fire in a bar on New Years Eve 2024 which killed 40 people and injured 116. BBC (2026). Swiss regions ban pyrotechnics after ski bar fire (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgezqvwr54no>)
23. See regulation 31 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015.
24. WHO (2011). Burden of disease from environmental noise – Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789289002295>)
25. Social Market Foundation and RSPCA (October 2024). Out with the Bang: examining the case for alternatives to traditional fireworks (<https://www.smf.co.uk/publications/alternatives-to-trad-fireworks/>)
26. "The above regulations and clauses are ambiguous and require assumptions to be made about what was the intended noise descriptor to use, and if one could keep selecting 10 additional fireworks to test until there is a pass." Page, Wyatt and McClaren, Stuart (2014). New Zealand Code of Practice for retail fireworks – Revision of the noise testing provisions: Experiences and findings.' Internoise 2014
27. Office for Product Safety and Standards (2023). Noise Testing of Fireworks (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-testing-of-fireworks>)

28. The dBA scale is logarithmic. To achieve this 50 percent reduction in the perceived loudness from fireworks, we would reduce the current decibel level by 10 dBA.
29. See regulation 7 of the Fireworks Regulations 2004.
30. Relevant standards – BS EN 15947 (2022 series); BS EN 16263 (2015 series)
31. Office for Product Safety and Standards (2023). Noise Testing of Fireworks (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-testing-of-fireworks>) P.9
32. Office for Product Safety and Standards (2023). Noise Testing of Fireworks (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/noise-testing-of-fireworks>) P 22-23.



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