FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Be Safe This Fourth of July

The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department would like to remind our residents to be safe during the Fourth of July festivities.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recently shared these safety tips around fireworks:

- Never allow children to play with or light fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit—hot enough to melt some metals.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area, and only purchase and set off fireworks that are labeled for consumer (not professional) use.
- Never use fireworks while also using alcohol or drugs.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby, in case of fire.
- Light fireworks one at a time, then move back to a safe distance quickly.
- Never try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them with water and throw them away.
- Never place any part of your body directly over fireworks when lighting the fuse.
- Never point or throw fireworks (including sparklers) at anyone.
- After fireworks complete their burning, to prevent a trash fire, douse them with plenty of water from a bucket or hose before discarding

Additionally, FoodSafety.gov shared grilling and picnic safety tips:

- Always start grilling with clean hands. You should especially wash your hands before and after touching raw meat, poultry and seafood items to prevent the spread of foodborne illness bacteria.
    - Always wash fruits and vegetables before preparing. Run fruits and vegetables under clean, running water and gently rub to remove any debris. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
    - Never wash or rinse meat, poultry or seafood items. Doing so greatly increases your risk of cross-contamination because bacteria can be spread to other foods, utensils and surfaces.
- Always keep your raw meat, poultry and seafood items separate from ready-to-eat foods. Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood chilled until ready to grill, in the fridge or in an insulated cooler, below 40°F.
- Clean work surfaces, utensils, and the grill before and after cooking.
- Examine the grill surface carefully for bristles that might have dropped off the grill brush. They could get into your cooked food and hurt you if swallowed.
- As soon as you put raw items on the grill, get a clean plate or serving dish ready for when the items are done. Ultimately, it is NOT safe to use the same plate or utensils you originally used to place raw items on the grill, unless they have been fully washed and sanitized.
- Throw away or thoroughly cook marinades and sauces that have touched raw meat or seafood.
- The recommended safe internal temperature varies depending on the product you're cooking:
    - Beef, pork, lamb and veal (steaks, roasts and chops): 145°F (63°C) (with a 3-minute rest time)
    - Ground meats (including burgers and hot dogs): 160°F (71°C)
    - Whole poultry, poultry breasts and ground poultry: 165°F (74°C)
    - Fish: 145°F (63°C)
- The rates of food poisoning increase in summer because bacteria grow faster in warmer weather. Eating food left in the Danger Zone (40°F to 140°F) for too long can make people sick.
- Put leftovers in the freezer or refrigerator within two hours of cooking –or ONE hour if above 90°F outside.

- Throw away any remaining perishable food that isn't refrigerated.

"We hope everyone enjoys a fun and most importantly, SAFE, Fourth of July," said Amy Phelps, Public Information Officer of the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department.

Find more safety information at cpsc.gov and foodsafety.gov.

The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department serves Wood, Wirt, Calhoun, Pleasants, Ritchie and Roane Counties. It is located at 211 Sixth St. in Parkersburg. The offices are open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 304-485-7374 or visit the website, movhd.com for more information. Follow them at Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department MOVHD on Facebook and @MOVHealthDept on Instagram and Twitter.