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News Release

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Celebrate Responsibly, Safely on July Fourth

DURHAM, N.C. – The first holiday of the summer season is a great time to celebrate with family and friends. The Durham Police Department is reminding residents to celebrate responsibly. Here are a few tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday.

- **Celebrate safely:** Don't participate in celebratory gunfire. The act of pointing a gun towards the sky and firing shots into the air to commemorate an event or holiday is unsafe and against the law. In Durham, anyone caught firing a gun into the air could be charged with a Class 3 misdemeanor and face a fine of up to \$500.
- **Be aware:** Always be aware of your surroundings and call 911 to report any suspicious activity.
- **Park smart:** Be sure to park only in permitted lots and pay attention to any "No Parking" signs to avoid citations or fines. Violators are also subject to having their vehicles towed and impounded. Also, be aware of possible road or lane closures due to events.
- **Prevent crime:** Keep your car clean inside and don't make it tempting for criminals to break into your vehicle. Be sure to remove all valuables from unattended vehicles including purses, cell phones, GPS navigation systems, laptops and firearms.
- **Celebrate responsibly:** Don't drink and drive. Use a designated driver, call a cab or Uber, phone a friend, or walk. Spending the night in a jail cell is no way to celebrate your freedom and independence.

Firework Safety:

- If you purchase fireworks for your personal entertainment, be sure that the fireworks are legal.
- Read instructions carefully. If under the age of 16, please have adult supervision.
- Never light fireworks indoors. This also includes vehicles.
- Never light fireworks near dry grass.
- Always have a fire extinguisher present while using fireworks.
- If the fireworks malfunction, soak the fireworks with water and dispose of the fireworks.

- Always be considerate of your neighbors. According to a Durham noise ordinance, from 11 p.m. to 8 a.m., the sound level should not be louder than 50 decibels. Experts say that compares to a quiet conversation at home.

Pet Safety:

- Loud, crowded fireworks displays are no fun for pets, who can become frightened or disoriented by the sound. Please resist the urge to take them to Independence Day festivities, and opt instead to keep them safe from the noise in a quiet, sheltered and escape-proof area at home.
- Never use fireworks around pets. While exposure to lit fireworks can potentially result in severe burns and/or trauma to the face and paws of curious pets, even unused fireworks can pose a danger. Many types contain potentially toxic substances, including potassium nitrate, arsenic and other heavy metals.
- Never leave alcoholic drinks unattended where pets can reach them. Alcoholic beverages have the potential to poison pets. If ingested, the animal could become very intoxicated and weak, severely depressed or could go into a coma. Death from respiratory failure is also a possibility in severe cases.
- Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with visible identification that has its name and your telephone number. If your pet is microchipped, make sure this vital information is current.
- If your pet gets lost or you find a lost animal, report it to the nearest animal shelter or animal control agency as soon as possible. Provide pictures.

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