

By Doug Taylor

So What If It Rains...?

Weather is a factor in your event and fireworks displays, but is it a show stopper?

There are only a few weather conditions in which a fireworks display cannot be shot. Perhaps the most obvious is lightning. A storm that includes localized lightning presents significant dangers to both the spectators and the technicians responsible for shooting the display. Zambelli will pull its crew off the site during a lightning storm that is situated within a distance of the show site, indicating that it is not safe. The good news is that the spectators have probably already left.

Heavy winds can create a situation where the pyrotechnics could be blown beyond the Display Area. The Display Area in Zambelli displays is defined as 100 feet per inch of diameter of shell. Therefore, a six inch shell requires an area that provides 600 feet in all directions from where the fireworks are being ignited. With a wind that exceeds 20 miles per hour, the flight of the shells can be deflected significantly. The typical response of Zambelli personnel and regulators is to postpone the display.

Drought has been a factor that has impacted displays in many parts of

the country. We have experienced local or state burn bans in Florida, West Virginia, Kentucky, Colorado and California in recent years. In these cases, the local regulators have determined it is unsafe to shoot a display due to the fire danger. A specific site can also present its own problems. The grass or underbrush should be cut and cleared if the conditions are dry. Even if the signs all indicate that the display can be shot, having the local fire department available on site to ensure any flare-up is addressed is either required or highly recommended. Either the local regulator or our head technician can make the decision to not shoot the display if conditions are not safe.

What we can do if the weather is not ideal:

- Shoot in the rain.
- Shoot in the snow and cold. (Ask our crews in Minnesota about their New Year's Eve Displays.)
- Shoot between bands of storms that are coming through. We watch the radar on our smart phones.
- Shoot early or late, depending on what the forecast is.
- Postpone to another date.

Proudly known as the "First Family of Fireworks," Zambelli is one of the oldest and largest American fireworks companies. Today, the family name is synonymous with quality, creativity and safety.

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If you have fireworks questions you would like us to address in our column, please email me, Doug Taylor, President/CEO Zambelli Fireworks at doug.taylor@zambellifireworks.com.