



Protect Yourself Pest Control Pyrotechnics

Pest control pyrotechnics are specialized explosive devices used to disperse nuisance wild animals without injuring them. Common types include screamer siren or bird banger cartridges fired from a launch pistol and shellcrackers fired from a 12-gauge break-action shotgun. All of these contain high explosives and must be handled with extreme care to prevent injury or damage to property. All pyrotechnics, including those with fuses, are regulated by state and local laws and by stringent federal controls.

General Safety Precautions

- Notify law enforcement agencies prior to shooting.
- Always use eye and hearing protection.
- Keep the muzzle of the launch pistol pointed in a safe direction, away from any people.
- Shoot away from any buildings, vehicles and dry vegetation.
- Ensure immediate access to a class ABC fire extinguisher.
- Keep spare cartridges covered and away from the launch pistol.
- Never shoot from the inside of a vehicle or carry a loaded launch pistol in a vehicle.
- Consider wind direction and overhead obstructions.

Storage

- Store pyrotechnics to prevent access to them by children or unauthorized persons.
- Store devices in original packaging and inside a locked metal container with a non-sparking interior.
- Keep devices in a cool, dry, non-residential location.

Loading and Using a Launch Pistol

- Cock the hammer.
- Insert a blank cap under the spring clip.
- Place your thumb between the cap and hammer to prevent accidental discharge.
- Point the muzzle in a safe direction and insert a pyrotechnic cartridge fully into the barrel; insert the hollow end of the screamer siren or the exposed black powder end of the bird banger cartridge first.
- Hold the launch pistol at arm's length and elevate it toward the target at a 45 degree angle or greater.
- Remove your thumb, look away from the pistol, and pull the trigger.

Using Shotgun Shellcrackers

- Use a 12-gauge break-action, breech-loading shotgun.
- Inspect the gun's barrel for blockage from the breech end after every shot.
- Never look directly into the gun's muzzle.
- An open or improved cylinder barrel is recommended.
- Bore brush the gun's barrel after every 5th shot.
- If a shellcracker fails to explode when fired, keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction for at least one minute, and then unload.

For more complete information:



Wildlife
Services

www.aphis.usda.gov/ws
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