



Fireworks Display Malfunction – Unintended Discharge of Pyrotechnic Devices

Incident Location: CarMax Park

Address: 2929 Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA

Incident Type: Fireworks Display Safety Incident

Date/Time: July 24, 2026 - 2145hrs

Reported By: John Washington /Lt. Assistant Fire Marshal

Agency: Richmond Fire Marshal Office (804) 646-0617

Incident Summary

On July 24, 2026, during a scheduled fireworks display at CarMax Park, located at 2929 Arthur Ashe Blvd., Richmond, VA, a malfunction occurred involving several Roman candle pyrotechnic devices.

During the display, multiple Roman candles were deployed from their secured placement on the fireworks trailer in an unintended direction across the field toward areas occupied by spectators and event participants.

One Roman candle traveled into the dugout area, while two additional Roman candles traveled across the field and impacted the perimeter wall directly in front of the spectator seating area. The unintended discharge created a significant life safety hazard due to the proximity of the projectiles to spectators and occupied areas.

Incident Details

During the fireworks operation, Roman candles that were intended to discharge in a controlled upward direction from their trailer-mounted positions. The devices subsequently discharged horizontally across the field due to improper installation. The affected projectiles traveled as follows:

- One Roman candle entered the dugout corridor area.
- Two Roman candles traveled across the field in multiple directions and struck the perimeter wall located in front of spectators.



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- The malfunction resulted in pyrotechnic devices entering areas that were not designated for discharge and created the potential for serious injury to spectators, event personnel, and participants.
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Immediate Actions Taken

- An order was given simultaneously to the pyrotechnic technician to immediately stop the fireworks display.
 - The fireworks show was halted to prevent any additional unintended discharges and to protect spectators, staff, and participants.
 - Fire marshals on scene immediately checked the area for potential injuries or fire in the area where the roman candles struck.
 - The affected fireworks equipment and trailer setup were given a 30 mins to cool down to ensure public safety, secure remaining shells and to determine the cause of the failure.
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Findings and Safety Concerns

The investigation identified that the Roman candles were not maintained in their intended secured position during operation, resulting in an unintended discharge path toward occupied areas.

The incident presented a critical safety concern due to:

- Loss of control of pyrotechnic devices during operation.
 - Discharge of fireworks toward spectators and occupied areas.
 - Potential for fire, burns, or serious injury.
 - The investigation determined that the 40 mm Roman candles had been installed / loaded upside down, contributing to the unsafe firing condition.
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Conclusion

During the fireworks display at CarMax Park, multiple Roman candles became deployed from their secured trailer placement and discharged in an unintended direction toward occupied areas. It was found that 40 mm Roman candles had been installed / loaded upside down, contributing to the unsafe firing condition.



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Immediate action was taken by ordering the pyrotechnic technicians to stop the display, preventing further risk to spectators and event personnel. There were no reports of any injuries to the two fire marshals on duty. Additional safety concerns were identified regarding the transportation of fireworks materials without required DOT hazardous materials placarding.