



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

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TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JUNE 23, 2015

FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT WARD: ALL

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY FOR 2014 AND UPDATE ON FIREWORKS ABATEMENT EFFORTS FOR 2015

ISSUES:

The issues for City Council consideration are 1) to receive a report on fireworks enforcement actions taken to prevent fires and promote safety during last year's Independence Day celebration; and 2) fireworks abatement plans for the upcoming July 4th holiday.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council receive and file this report.

BACKGROUND:

The manufacturing, possession, storage, use or handling of fireworks is prohibited in the City of Riverside under Section 16.32.100 of the Riverside Municipal Code. During last year's 4th of July season, the Fire and Police departments received 455 calls for service due to reported firework activity. The Fire Department responded to 14 fire calls, which resulted in a minimal amount of property damage and no reports of fire related injuries. The Fire Department issued 16 Administrative Citations and made various warnings to those in violation throughout the City. A moderate amount of fireworks were confiscated and dropped off at local fire stations for proper disposal. In addition, all 14 fire stations were encouraged to be visible during the 4th of July to enforce the ordinance and educate the public on the danger associated with fireworks.

The Fire Department welcomes this upcoming Fourth of July by encouraging safe celebrations and reminding residents that all fireworks are illegal in the City of Riverside. The Fourth of July is a day for celebration, but not at the expense of safety. We urge residents to enjoy their 4th of July season by joining friends and families at a legal, licensed and permitted public fireworks display. Residents are encouraged to attend the City's 4th of July Spectacular Aerial Fireworks Shows at La Sierra Park or Mt. Rubidoux. Both shows begin at 9pm.

We have increased our outreach efforts this year to make certain that Riverside residents understand that fireworks are illegal. When most residents think of fireworks, they think of large bottle rockets, roman candles and firecrackers; however the ban also includes sparklers, as they can reach up to 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit. Illegal fireworks are the cause of multiple structure, vehicle and wild land fires annually. Current drought conditions and high temperatures in our region pose an extreme threat of catastrophic fire loss, and those responsible for the use of

fireworks can be held liable for damages as well as fire suppression costs. Parents may also be liable for fireworks damage caused by their children. For residents who'd like to observe the tradition, champagne party poppers are not considered fireworks and are deemed legal for use in Riverside.

The Fire and Police Departments are currently actively engaged in a fireworks abatement program focused on education, prevention, enforcement and communication. Actions to promote a safe 4th of July include:

1. "Fireworks are Illegal" signs posted throughout the City, and banners hung at all fourteen Fire Stations for two weeks prior;
2. Electronic Bulletin boards at Marketplace and Auto Center to display fireworks safety messages for three weeks prior;
3. Riverside Fire Department and Riverside Police Department have partnered to enforce fireworks violations through City-wide patrols effective July 1 – July 5;
4. Fire management staff will be on duty and on-call for emergency responses as deemed necessary; and
5. Several reserve fire engines will be staffed the evening of July 4th to assist with any potential incidents which may occur.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no impact to the General Fund.

Prepared by: Michael D. Moore, Fire Chief

Certified as to

availability of funds: Brent A. Mason, Finance Director/Treasurer

Approved by: Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney