



Fireworks in the City

City Manager's Office

Public Safety Committee
October 19, 2016

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FIREWORKS LEGISLATION CHANGE

1. Consider whether or not to legalize "safe and sane" fireworks, therefore allowing such fireworks to be sold, purchased, stored and used in the City limits.
2. Adopt an ordinance amending Riverside Municipal Code Chapter to amend Chapter 1.17.231 and add Chapter 1.18, to strengthen the consequences of using illegal fireworks in the City limits.



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CURRENTLY

1. Right now, ALL fireworks are illegal in the City of Riverside.
2. The manufacturing, possession, storage, use or handling of fireworks is prohibited under Section 16.32.100 of the Riverside Municipal Code.



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DEFINITIONS

1. ***Safe and sane*** fireworks (Section 12529) are fireworks which are not classified under "dangerous" or "exempt".
2. ***Dangerous*** fireworks (Sec. 12505) include specified harmful or dangerous chemicals such as arsenic sulfide and boron, those that rise in the air, discharge balls of fire into the air, travel about the surface of the ground, create the element of surprise, explode by means of friction or on impact, sparklers more than 10'' in length or ¼'' in diameter, and any other fireworks determined to be unsafe by the State Fire Marshal
3. ***Exempt*** fireworks (Sec. 12508) are special items containing pyrotechnic compositions which are limited to industrial, commercial, agricultural, or religious use, authorized by a permit.



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LEGALIZE SAFE AND SANE

1. Currently permitted in 57 of the 139 cities across Los Angeles County, Imperial County, Orange County and Ventura County
2. 13 of 52 cities within the Counties of Riverside and San Bernardino permit safe and sane fireworks



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LEGALIZE SAFE AND SANE

Should safe and sane fireworks should be legalized in the City of Riverside? If so, the policy questions are:

1. Whether legalizing safe and sane fireworks will act as a deterrent to dangerous fireworks?
2. Whether legalizing safe and sane fireworks will increase the overall volume of fireworks?



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LEGALIZE SAFE AND SANE

Potential impacts:

1. Fundraising opportunities for non-profits
2. Additional fire dangers
3. Additional staffing costs for increased response calls



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LEGALIZE SAFE AND SANE

If Safe and Sane fireworks are to be legalized, additional analysis will be needed for:

1. Which department will be responsible for the program?
2. What is the cost for education and outreach?
3. What are the start-up costs for the City to implement the new program?
4. What are the ongoing costs to the City to regulate the program?
5. What are the consequences of violations?



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STRENGTHEN CONSEQUENCES

According the National Fire Protection Association during the period of June 21-July 21 2013:

1. U.S. hospital emergency rooms saw an estimated 11,400 people for fireworks related injuries,
2. 40% of which were children under the age of 15.
3. On Independence Day, fireworks account for 40% of all reported fires—more than any other cause of fire.



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STRENGTHEN CONSEQUENCES

The Fire Department has increased educational efforts:

1. Many residents think illegal fireworks are large bottle rockets, roman candles, and firecrackers.
2. Currently, the ban also includes sparklers, as they can reach up to 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. Illegal fireworks cause of multiple structure, vehicle and wildland fires.



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STRENGTHEN CONSEQUENCES

Despite educational efforts, fireworks remain a life safety issue in the City:

Year	911 Calls	Fires	Injuries	Citations	Patrol Contacts	Fireworks Confiscated
2015	768	10	0	29	205	620 lbs
2016	916	9	6	20	160	780 lbs



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STRENGTHEN CONSEQUENCES

Propose amendment to the RMC includes:

1. Increasing fines from \$500 to not less than \$1,000 plus a disposal fee of up to \$250
2. Parents, guardians, or others in custody or control of any person under the age of 18, would be subject to receiving an administrative citation in addition to the citation issued to an offending minor
3. 65% of the fines collected for "dangerous fireworks" are to be remitted to the State Fire Marshall



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PUBLIC SAFETY CHIEFS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the Police Chief and Fire Chief strongly recommend against the legalization of safe and sane fireworks and support the ordinance to strengthen consequences for firework related violations.

The legalization of safe and sane fireworks:

1. Increase the number of illegal fireworks activity in the City
2. Necessary determination if the fireworks are as dangerous fireworks verses safe and sane
3. Greater demand for police and fire resources



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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwK7jHXp5z0&sns=em>



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RECOMMENDATION

That the Public Safety Committee recommend that the City Council:

1. Consider whether or not to legalize "safe and sane" fireworks, therefore allowing such fireworks to be sold, purchased, stored and used in the City limits; and/or
2. Adopt an ordinance amending Riverside Municipal Code Chapter to amend Chapter 1.17231 and add Chapter 1.18, to strengthen the consequences of using illegal fireworks in the City limits.



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