



City of Arts & Innovation

Public Safety Committee

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE **DATE: MAY 17, 2017**
FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR 2017

ISSUE:

Receive an update on illegal fireworks education and enforcement activities for 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Public Safety Committee:

1. Receive this informational report on Fire Department and Police Department enforcement efforts to reduce the use of illegal fireworks; and
2. Forward the update to City Council.

BACKGROUND:

All fireworks are illegal in the City of Riverside.

1. 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 (RMC).
2. RMC Chapter 1.18, Section 1.18.040 Penalties: In addition to any remedy available at law, any person in violation of any provision of this Chapter or Section 16.32.375 of this Code involving 25 pounds or less of fireworks is subject to the issuance of an administrative citation of one-thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) and a disposal fee as set by the state.
3. RMC Chapter 16.32, Section 104.1.1 Citations: The fire code official and his or her designee are authorized to issue a citation to persons operating or maintaining an occupancy, premises, or vehicle subject to this code who allow a hazard to exist or fail to take immediate action to abate a hazard on such occupancy, premises or vehicle when ordered or notified to do so.
4. RMC Chapter 16.32, Section 16.32.080 Assistance from Other Agencies: Police and other enforcement agencies shall have authority to render necessary assistance in the investigation of fires or enforcement when requested to do so.

According to a report issued by the National Fire Protection Association, in 2011, fireworks caused an estimated 17,800 fires, resulting in an estimated 40 civilian injuries and \$32 million in direct property damage. In the period of June 21-July 21 2013, U.S. hospital emergency rooms saw an estimated 11,400 people for fireworks related injuries, 40% of which were children under the age of 15. On Independence Day, fireworks account for 40% of all reported fires—more than any other cause of fire.

Over the past three years, the Fire Department has increased outreach efforts to make certain Riverside residents understand that fireworks are illegal in the City of Riverside. 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 wildland fires annually. Those responsible for the use of fireworks can be held liable for damages as well as fire suppression costs.

DISCUSSION:

The Riverside Fire Department (RFD) and Riverside Police Department (RPD) fireworks abatement activities for this year will continue to focus on public education, prevention and enforcement. Specific actions to promote a safe Fourth of July will include:

1. RFD, RPD and Riverside TV are developing Public Safety Announcement on the danger involving fireworks. Riverside TV has begun airing previously developed firework PSA's, and is currently developing a new PSA to begin airing toward the end of May.
2. "Fireworks are Illegal" flyer, signs and inserts will be distributed throughout the City. Banners are displayed at all fire stations, and a flyer (attached) will be distributed to schools and handed out at meetings leading up to the 4th of July. The flyer is currently displayed on the Fire Department's social media page and website. In addition, the electronic billboards at the Marketplace and Auto Mall adjacent to the 91 Freeway will display fireworks safety messages during the month of June. Finally, the City's Marketing team has arranged to have the flyer inserted in the June utilities mailer delivered to over 100,000 households.
3. RFD and RPD will utilize social media to discuss ongoing steps that RFD and RPD are taking to enforce the RMC, to bring a wider awareness to the community and reduce illegal fireworks activity.
4. RFD and RPD will enforce the City's updated fireworks ordinance that provides for violation fines of \$1,000. The fine for illegal fireworks has increased this year from \$500 to \$1000. Any persons caught using fireworks will be subject to the fine. Any property owners who allow illegal fireworks to be utilized on their property may be fined, and any parent who has a child under the age of eighteen who engages in illegal fireworks activity will be subject to fine.
5. The City's Marketing team has developed materials regarding the dangers associated with fireworks. RPD's school resource officers will distribute the materials to the local schools toward the end of May.

6. RFD and RPD will continue to attend community meetings and talk about the dangers associated with fireworks. A meeting schedule is currently under development and will be presented to the Public Safety Committee during the May 17 meeting.
7. RFD and RPD will staff additional personnel the evening of July 4. RFD will assign an additional eighteen crew members to staff the Mt. Rubidoux fireworks show.
8. Fire management staff will be on duty and on-call for emergencies. Three battalion chiefs will be on duty the evening of July 4, and four additional chief officers will be on call and available to respond if the situation dictates a need for additional staffing.
9. All 14 Fire stations are directed to maintain a visible presence during July 4 festivities to enforce RMC 16.31.100 and to educate the public on the danger associated with fireworks.

Illegal Fireworks Summary

Despite education and outreach efforts, illegal fireworks remain a serious life safety issue in the City of Riverside. In order to promote community risk reduction throughout the year, all stakeholders must be involved, support enforcement and mitigation efforts and continue to educate and ensure public safety.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with acceptance of this informational report.

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Certified as to	
availability of funds:	Scott G. Miller, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by:	Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Fireworks Flyer – English/Spanish