



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JUNE 13, 2017**
FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR 2017

ISSUES:

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council receive this report on Fire and Police enforcement efforts to reduce the use of illegal fireworks.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Safety Committee met on May 17, 2017, with Chair Perry, Vice Chair Melendrez and Member Burnard present, to consider the Fire Department's fireworks education and enforcement plans for 2017. After discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the update be forwarded to the City Council.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

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.

BACKGROUND:

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 a Public Safety Announcement on the danger involving fireworks. Riverside TV has begun airing previously developed firework PSA's, and the new PSA will air the first week of June.
2. "Fireworks are Illegal" flyer, signs and inserts distributed throughout the City. Banners are displayed at all fire stations, and a flyer (attached) will be distributed to schools and handed out at community events leading up to the 4th of July. The flyer is currently 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 beginning June 1. 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 use social media outlets to identify firework sales activity. Utilizing social media as an outlet to discuss ongoing steps that RFD and RPD are taking to enforce the RMC will bring a wider awareness to the community and reduce illegal fireworks activity.
4. Partnership between RFD and RPD to enforce fireworks violations of \$1,000. The fine for illegal fireworks has increased this year from \$500 to \$1,000. Any persons caught using fireworks will be subject to the fine. Any property owners who allow illegal fireworks activity 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 are distributing the materials to the local schools.
6. RFD and RPD will continue to attend community events to educate attendees on the dangers associated with fireworks.
7. RFD and RPD will staff additional personnel the evening of July 4. RFD will assign eighteen additional crew members to staff the Mt. Rubidoux fireworks show.
8. Fire management staff 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.

In addition, 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.

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

Concurs with:



Jim Perry, Chair
Public Safety Committee

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Fireworks Flyer