



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MAY 7, 2024

FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR JULY 4, 2023

ISSUE:

Fire Department, Police Department, and Code Enforcement update on Fourth of July 2023, efforts to reduce the use of illegal fireworks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council receive an update on fireworks enforcement activities for 2023.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2022, reported Emergency rooms treated over ten thousand (10,000) injuries related to Fireworks and eleven (11) deaths. To reduce illegal fireworks activity within the city, the Fire Department, Police Department, and Community Development/Code Enforcement Division are working collaboratively on a fireworks education and enforcement campaign. The campaign's goal is to ensure that residents understand that all fireworks are prohibited in Riverside and that violation may result in administrative citations as well as restitution costs for any damages that may result. The following Riverside Municipal Codes are:

1. The manufacturing, possession, storage, use or handling of fireworks is prohibited in the City of Riverside under Section 16.32.370 Section 5601.1.1 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; and
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 the authority to render necessary assistance in the investigation of fires or enforcement when requested to do so.

DISCUSSION:

In 2023, the lead personnel for the fireworks task force were Fire Captain Mendoza, Police Sergeant Elliot, and Code Enforcement Manager Merk. Abatement activities for this year focused on public education, prevention, and enforcement. Specific actions taken to promote a safe Fourth of July included:

1. Riverside Office of Communications, Riverside Fire Department, and the Riverside Police Department provided fireworks Public Safety Announcements (PSAs), aired throughout June and July.
2. The electronic billboards at the Auto Mall near Adams and the 91 Freeway, and the Marketplace at Mission Inn Avenue and the 91 Freeway featured the “No Fireworks” message beginning in June;
3. RFD and RPD used social media outlets to identify fireworks sales activity.
4. The fine for illegal fireworks is \$1,000. RFD, RPD, and Code Enforcement partnered to enforce fireworks violations.
5. RFD, Code Enforcement, and RPD increased staffing from June 29 – July 4, 2023. RFD overstaffed six (9) fire apparatus to stand-by at the Mt. Rubidoux fireworks show on July 4, 2024.
6. Fire management staff were on duty and on-call for emergencies. Three battalion chiefs were on duty for July 4, and four additional chief officers were on-call and available to respond if needed.
7. 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.
8. Five (5) to seven (7) Task Force groups were active nightly.
9. Response and Citation totals for June 30, 2023, and July 4, 2023 were:

Total Radio Calls	Total On- View	Total 311 Calls	Total Citations Issued	Total Fireworks Seized	Total Collected from Citations
279	132	82	29	340 pounds	\$2,000

Citation Summary: Provided by Finance on February 22, 2024

- Twenty-four (24) citations were referred to Finance for billing.
- Two (2) citations have been paid in full.
- Following exhaustive internal collection efforts, the unpaid accounts will be referred to an external collections agency.

Citation Ward Breakdown:

Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7
0	6	3	5	6	6	3

Illegal Fireworks Summary

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

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Items contributing to Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Priorities:

No. 2 Community Well-Being

- No. 2.6 Strengthen community preparedness for emergencies to ensure effective response and recovery.
1. **Community Trust** – Providing enforcement during the July 4 Holiday keeps our community safe and ensures community trust between the City of Riverside and its residents.
 2. **Equity** – Enforcement is provided in all Wards of the City to keep all communities within the City of Riverside safe.
 3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Fiscal responsibility is at the forefront during the planning and implementation process for all services provided during the July 4 holiday.
 4. **Innovation** – The City of Riverside team uses all tools available to keep the community educated, informed, and safe during the July 4 holiday.
 5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The City of Riverside dedicates sufficient resources to sustain the needed resources to adequately enforce and keep citizens safe during the July 4 holiday.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to receiving this report.

Prepared by:	Steve McKinster, Deputy Fire Chief
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Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Fireworks Ward July 2- July 5, 2023