

2024 Fireworks Update

Fire Department

City Council
December 17, 2024



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SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee convened on November 20, 2024, with Chair Perry, Vice Chair Conder, and Member Mill in attendance, to review an informational report on the 2024 fireworks enforcement activities and explore options to enhance enforcement efforts moving forward. Following discussion and a formal motion, the Committee:

1. Received an update on fireworks enforcement activities for 2024;
2. Provided a recommendation to utilize sUAS technology for fireworks enforcement;
3. Provided a recommendation to amend RMC 1.18 to include Social Host Liability;
4. Provided a recommended that the Finance Department forward all outstanding citations to collections; and
5. Provided a recommended that the update be presented to the City Council.



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BACKGROUND

- Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2023, reported over nine thousand seven hundred (9,700) injuries related to fireworks and eight (8) deaths.
- To reduce illegal firework activity within the city, the Riverside Fire Department (RFD), Police Department (RPD), and Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) / 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 a violation may result in an administrative citations as well as restitution costs for any damages that may result.



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RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE

- Riverside Municipal Code 16.32.370 Section 5601.1.1:
 - The manufacturing, possession, storage, use, and handling of fireworks is prohibited.
- RMC Chapter 1.18, Section 1.18.040 Penalties:
 - Admin Citation in the amount of \$1,500 and a disposal fee set by the state.
- RMC Chapter 16.32, Section 104.1.1 Citations:
 - Fire code official and his or her designee are authorized to issue a citation.
- RMC Chapter 16.32, Section 16.32.080 Assistance from Other Agencies:
 - Authority to render assistance with investigation of fires/enforcement when requested to do so.



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FIREWORKS PROGRAM ACTIONS

- The Riverside Office of Communications, Riverside Fire Department, and the Riverside Police Department provided fireworks Public Safety Announcements (PSAs), aired throughout June and July.
- 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.
- RFD and RPD used social media outlets to identify fireworks sales activity.
- The fine for illegal fireworks was increased to \$1,500. RFD, RPD, and Code Enforcement partnered to enforce fireworks violations.



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FIREWORKS PROGRAM ACTIONS

- RFD, Code Enforcement, and RPD increased staffing from June 29 – July 4, 2024. RFD overstaffed eight (8) fire apparatus to stand by at the Mt. Rubidoux and (1) at the La Sierra fireworks shows on July 4, 2024
- 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.
- 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.
- Five (5) to seven (7) Task Force groups were active nightly.



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Response and Citation Information

- Data totals collected between June 30, 2024, and July 4, 2024:

Total Radio Calls	Total On-View	Total 311 Calls	Total Fireworks Seized	Total Citations Issued	Total Collected from Citations
344	99	87	1,800 Lbs.	24	\$3,645

- Citations Update:
 - Twenty-four (24) citations sent to Finance.
 - No citations have been sent to collections.
 - Two (2) citations have been paid in full.
 - 7 have been appealed, 0 have been reduced
 - Total unpaid- \$20,545



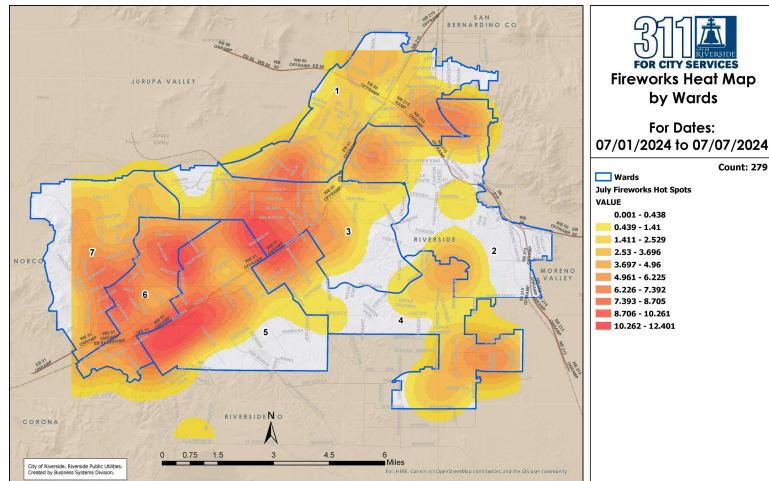
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Citation By Ward

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



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FISCAL IMPACT

- Fiscal Impact from Jun 30 to July 4, 2024, fireworks enforcement and event staffing totaled \$72,860.
- Department financial breakdown:

Code Enforcement	Police Department	Fire Department
\$11,255	\$45,074	\$16,531



sUAS Technology for Fireworks Enforcement

Fireworks Enforcement: RFD and RPD recommend enhancements to RMC 1.18 to include sUAS enforcement leading up to and on July 4.

- Utilizing certified pilots to conduct flights in areas known to have high incidences of illegal fireworks.
- Lawfully monitor and video record such activity to establish a nexus between unlawful activity.
- Generate written reports detailing our observations and work with the City Attorney’s Office (CAO) to issue administrative citations based on the observations of evidence.



sUAS Technology for Fireworks Enforcement

Training Requirements:

- Three-day Advanced Night Flying Operations Course
 - Course Cost: \$30,000

Equipment Needs:

- Four DJI M30 drones
 - Drone cost: \$56,106.93

Personnel Cost:

- Drone team for each ward.
- Teams consist of two licensed officers or firefighter (one pilot and 1 observer/safety)
 - Personnel Cost: \$60,584.00



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Riverside Municipal Code Update

The City Attorney's Office, amend RMC 1.18 to provide a section for:

1. Social Host Liability: The Ordinance will include language that is unlawful for any social host to allow by invitation or consent the use of illegal or storage of fireworks, and to hold the parent or guardians of juveniles liable when found to violate RMC 1.18.
2. sUAS: Authorize RFD RPD authorizes the use of sUAS (small unmanned aircraft system) to be used for fireworks enforcement.
3. Penalties: Additional each subsequent violation shall be subject to increasing administrative penalties no less than \$3,000.00, but not more than \$25,000, per citation.



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City Attorney's Office – Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Intercept Program

In 2023, the CAO established the first ever FTB Intercept Program to collect judgments and fines owed to the City. The FTB Intercept Program is effective because it:

- Intercepts tax refunds: It captures tax refunds owed to individuals who have outstanding debts to the City, ensuring these debts are paid.
- Encourages timely payment: By intercepting refunds, it incentivizes individuals to pay their debts promptly to avoid losing their refund.
- Improves collection rates: This program significantly increases the likelihood of collecting outstanding debts owed to the City.



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Recommendations

That the City Council:

1. Receive an update on fireworks enforcement activities for 2024;
2. Consider a recommendation to utilize sUAS technology for fireworks enforcement;
3. Provide funding for advanced night operation training;
4. Provide funding for the purchase of four (4) new DJI M30 Drones;
5. Consider a recommendation to amend RMC 1.18 to include Social Host Liability;
6. Consider a recommendation that the Finance Department forward all outstanding citations to the City Attorney's Office (CAO) for collection via the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Intercept Program, and that RFD, RPD, and Code collaborate in assigning resources so the CAO can effectively process the citation; and
7. Provide direction to staff regarding options for fireworks enforcement.



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