



City of Arts & Innovation

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: MARCH 11, 2025**

**FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE (RMC) 1.18.010 TO INCLUDE SOCIAL HOST LIABILITY FOR FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT. ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING (RMC) 1.18.020 TO ALLOW USE OF SUAS TECHNOLOGY FOR FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT.**

## **ISSUE:**

Adopt an ordinance that would provide for the use of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Teams to be utilized to enforce the RMC and adopt a Social Host Liability Ordinance in the RMC.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council adopt an ordinance amending RMC 1.18.010 to include a Social Host Liability and use of sUAS Technology for fireworks enforcement.

## **INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE:**

On February 25, 2025, the City Council unanimously approved to introduce an Ordinance, amending Chapter 1.18 of the Riverside Municipal Code regarding administrative penalties for violations of City firework laws.

## **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:**

Fireworks are illegal in the City of Riverside. The manufacturing, possession, storage, use, or handling of fireworks is prohibited under Riverside Municipal Code 16.32.375.

On May 21, 2024, the Riverside City Council adopted Ordinance 7664, which established penalties for violations of Section 1.18.040 at \$1,500.00, along with a disposal fee as determined by the State.

Relevant Municipal Codes on Fireworks:

1. Prohibition of Fireworks:  
The manufacturing, possession, storage, use, or handling of fireworks is prohibited in the City of Riverside under RMC Section 16.32.370.
2. Penalties for Violations:  
Under RMC Section 1.18.040, any person in violation of this chapter or RMC Section 16.32.375 involving 25 pounds or less of fireworks is subject to an administrative citation of \$1,500 and a disposal fee as determined by the state.

3. Authority to Issue Citations:

Under RMC Section 16.32.040, the fire code official and their designee are authorized to issue citations 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. Assistance from Other Agencies:

Under RMC Section 16.32.080, police and other enforcement agencies are authorized to provide necessary assistance in fire investigations or enforcement when requested.

**BACKGROUND:**

On November 20, 2024, the Fire Department presented to Safety, Wellness and Youth an update on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, fireworks activity. The Committee suggested changes for Council consideration, which would include Social Host Liability and escalating fines for repeat offenders. At the December 17, 2024, City Council meeting, the Fire Department presented potential changes to RMC 1.18 to Council and with Council's approval worked with the City Attorney's Office to amend the ordinance.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Fire Department requests the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the RMC which includes Social Host Liability and the use of sUAS Technology for fireworks enforcement.

- Each year RPD, RFD and Code Enforcement are challenged in their enforcement efforts by accurately determining an exact location from which illegal fireworks are being utilized. The use of sUAS technology will allow the agencies to safely and accurately determine the physical address from which fireworks are being discharged. Drone teams made up of a pilot and a Safety Officer specially trained and certified in night flying, will obtain video evidence obtained from above. The Drone Teams will enhance our ability to provide irrefutable evidence of the use of illegal fireworks at a specific address.
- Amendment of Riverside Municipal Code 1.18 to provide for a Social Host Liability will make the discharge of fireworks unlawful for any social host to allow by invitation or consent, and to hold the parent or guardians of juveniles liable when found to have violated RMC 1.18.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

Items contributing to Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Priorities:

No. 2 Community Well-Being

- Goal No. 2.6 Strengthen community preparedness for emergencies to ensure effective response and recovery.
1. Community Trust – Providing enforcement for fireworks keeps our community safe and ensures community trust between the City of Riverside and its residents.
  2. Equity – The proposed amendments will keep all communities within the City of Riverside safer from fires caused by illegal fireworks.

3. Fiscal Responsibility – The City of Riverside is attempting to reduce illegal fireworks to prevent injuries and fire loss to all residents within the community.
4. Innovation – The City of Riverside team uses all tools available, including Administrative Citations to keep the community safe.
5. Sustainability & Resiliency – The City of Riverside dedicates sufficient resources to enforce the Riverside Municipal Code to keep the community safe.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact for this change to RMC 1.18.

Prepared by: Jeff DeLaurie, Deputy Fire Chief

Attachment: Ordinance (Final)