



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Robert Sapien, Jr.

**SUBJECT: FIREWORKS PREVENTION
CAMPAIGN 2020**

DATE: June 18, 2020

Approved

Date

6/18/2020

INFORMATION

In time for the Fourth of July holiday, the City of San José and Santa Clara County Fire Department have collaborated on a public education campaign to remind residents that fireworks are illegal, dangerous and can result in fires and injuries that are easily preventable. The City's "Fed up with Fireworks" public education campaign is targeted to San José residents and the greater Santa Clara County. The program components remain: Education & Outreach, Reporting and Enforcement. In this, the fourth year of the campaign, collaboration with partners has continued and outreach has expanded. Goals of the campaign are to reduce injuries and fires; increase the number of actionable reports; decrease illegal firework activity; and educate residents of the dangers and potential fines associated with fireworks use.

The City/County public outreach and education campaign began June 15, 2020 in the San José area and features billboard and bus advertisements, as well as a digital advertising push. Banners are on display at all City fire stations, Police buildings, and a select number of community centers and libraries. Due to limited staffing in Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and Library Departments as a result of the City's response to COVID-19, some sites were closed to the public and unable to display banners. Outreach also includes a social media campaign to educate residents that, when it comes to fireworks, "It's Not Worth It." The campaign will emphasize the dangers of illegal fireworks, discourage use of fireworks and encourage use of the City's online fireworks reporting tool. San José Fire Department will also share public safety advisory videos recorded in English, Spanish and Vietnamese with a focus on encouraging resident use of the online reporting tool.

In 2019, three local schools partnered with the City to display fireworks messaging on their digital billboards. To assist in providing a consistent and far-reaching educational campaign, school outreach has been expanded this year and a messaging toolkit containing suggested banner, newsletter and social media copy has been shared with all school districts serving the San José community. A similar toolkit has also been provided to San José's City Council, neighborhood associations, Neighborhood Watch and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) groups.

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It should be noted that a fireworks hotspot police enforcement pilot was previously planned to be put in place this Fourth of July, however, due to shifting priorities in the Police Department and a reduction to their 2020-2021 overtime budget, there will no longer be overtime resources dedicated to this effort. Nevertheless, building on community feedback, the City has strengthened the review process for determining when citations will be issued for illegal fireworks use. Changes have been made to the reporting tool intended to increase ease and result in more actionable reports. San José residents can “Snap, Click, and Report” violators online:

1. **SNAP:** Safely take a photo or video of the person participating in the illegal activity.
2. **CLICK:** Visit www.sanjoseca.gov/fireworks.
3. **REPORT:** Fill out the online form with complete and accurate information regarding the illegal firework activity. Now, residents can upload up to five separate photos or videos as evidence of illegal activity.

Residents may also report fireworks via a 24-hour hotline at (408) 535-5600 or by calling 311. The online reporting tool is available year-round.

All reports will be reviewed and upon determination that sufficient evidence has been provided for both the violation and violator, the City’s Code Enforcement Division will issue a citation. A summary of event activity and resulting action will be provided.

Community members are advised that the sale, use and possession or storage of fireworks will result in the following fines:

<i>First Violation</i>	\$500
<i>Second Violation</i>	\$700 (within 18-month period from date of previous violation)
<i>Third and Subsequent Violations</i>	\$1,000 (within 18-month period from date of previous violation)

In past years, residents were encouraged to attend professional fireworks displays and community events, however, no such events are planned to take place this year due to the current health crisis. To supplement, the City and County will provide shared messaging to identify and encourage safe activities for residents to engage in while observing Health Orders issued by the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department. These activities will be added to the City’s website and publicized through a joint City/County press release and social media sharing.

More information is available at www.sanjoseca.gov/fireworks.

/s/

ROBERT SAPIEN, JR.

Fire Chief, Fire Department

For questions, please contact Hector R. Estrada, Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal at (408) 535-7794.

