



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Robert Sapien, Jr.

**SUBJECT: FIREWORKS PREVENTION  
CAMPAIGN 2023**

**DATE:** June 23, 2023

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Approved

Date

6/23/23

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## INFORMATION

The City of San José (City) continues its effort to reduce the use of illegal fireworks locally and regionally on and around the Independence Day holiday (July 4, 2023).

The City of San José Fire Department, Police Department, Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department, Information Technology Department, City Attorney’s Office, and the City Manager's Office developed and implemented focused efforts in public outreach and education and enforcement strategies for the 2023 Fireworks Prevention Campaign.

For its second year, the City partnered with Santa Clara County (County) on the “Fed Up with Fireworks?” public outreach and education campaign to deter the use of illegal fireworks and encourage attendance of safe and legal public displays this Independence Day holiday. The components of the fireworks outreach campaign incorporate education, outreach, reporting, and enforcement best practices. The desired outcomes in these efforts are to reduce injuries, fires, and illegal fireworks activity as well as increase in the number of actionable reports, education about the dangers of illegal fireworks use, and enforcement actions with associated fines for individuals choosing to use illegal fireworks or property owners that allow the use on their property. Through the partnership with the County, the City is positioned to reach and inform all residents and visitors to San José that the use or observance of all unpermitted fireworks is illegal.

The public outreach and education campaign began on June 1, 2023, throughout the San José area. “Fed Up with Fireworks?” banners have been deployed at fire stations, police buildings, community centers, and public libraries. Outreach efforts incorporate targeted messaging indicating that when it comes to illegal fireworks, “It’s Not Worth It”, and could result in significant fines. The digital social media campaign, which includes “Fed Up with Fireworks?” and “Fireworks Scare Our Pets” messaging, features public safety advisory videos and information provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese (simplified and traditional). The campaign seeks to educate residents on the dangers of illegal fireworks, discourage the use of fireworks, and encourage the use of the City’s *SJ311* online illegal fireworks reporting tool: <https://311.sanjoseca.gov/>.

Targeted stakeholder outreach and education includes a messaging “toolkit” to provide a consistent, far-reaching educational campaign. The “toolkit” contains multilingual messaging, newsletters, and social media graphics that will have been shared with key stakeholders including City Council offices, the City’s Neighborhoods Commission, Public Safety, Finance, & Strategic Support Committee, Neighborhood Watch, local school districts, neighborhood associations, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) groups. The fireworks public outreach and education campaign informs residents of citation fine amounts for the use of illegal fireworks, as well as provides additional information on the City’s Social Host Ordinance which prohibits spectatorship of illegal fireworks displays.

***Sale, Use, Possession, Storage, and Spectator of Fireworks Violation Fines:***

<b><i>First Violation</i></b>	\$1,000
<b><i>Second Violation</i></b>	\$2,000 (within 18-month period from date of previous violation)
<b><i>Third and Subsequent Violations</i></b>	\$3,000 (within 18-month period from date of previous violation)
<b><i>Sale of Fireworks</i></b>	May result in a fine of up to \$50,000 plus jail time, depending on quantity
<b><i>Illegal Fireworks Spectator*</i></b>	\$25

*\*Note: This citation is established per the City’s Municipal Code Section 10.17.105*

This year’s enforcement strategy places an emphasis on education and enforcement in the areas of San José that are most impacted by illegal firework activity. The City utilizes hotspot mapping data for targeted print, social, and digital advertising in the geographic areas that experience the largest incidence of illegal fireworks use. Additionally, this data is used to establish a preemptive presence in high-activity areas of San José to deter illegal use ahead of the Independence Day holiday. The City intends to leverage “live” hotspot data to continuously assess and deploy resources based on the progression of activity in comparison to historical hotspot mapping data from the prior year. The desired outcomes of these enhanced targeted enforcement strategies are to prevent firework-related injuries and fires, reduce illegal use and spectatorship, and empower the community to report illegal activity resulting in effective enforcement actions by the City.

The City continues to make reporting illegal fireworks a streamlined and effective process. Residents may report fireworks year-round through the *SJ311* website portal and mobile application, via the 24-hour hotline at (408) 535-5600, or by calling 3-1-1 within the city limits. Staff continues to review all reports, and upon a determination that sufficient evidence is provided for both the violation and violator, the City’s Code Enforcement Division will issue a citation.

Community members are encouraged to attend legally sanctioned, professional firework displays, and community events being hosted throughout the county. Fire agencies throughout Santa Clara County will provide joint messaging to identify and encourage safe activities for residents to participate. In San José, there are free professional fireworks shows scheduled to be held at [Almaden Lake Park](#) and [Discovery Meadow](#) on the Independence Day holiday.

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More information is available at [www.sanjoseca.gov/fireworks](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/fireworks).



ROBERT SAPIEN, JR.  
Fire Chief, Fire Department

For questions, please contact the following:

Fire Department – Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal James Dobson at [james.dobson@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:james.dobson@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-7794.

Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department – Deputy Director Rachel Roberts at [rachel.roberts@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:rachel.roberts@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-7719.

City Manager’s Office of Communications – Deputy Public Information Officer Kristen Van Kley at [kristen.vankley@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:kristen.vankley@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-8100.

City Manager’s Office – Deputy City Manager Rob Lloyd at [rob.lloyd@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:rob.lloyd@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 535-8100.

