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Chief of Police



City of Riverside
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Mayor



Fire Department
STEVE MCKINSTER
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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ILLEGAL FIREWORKS CRACKDOWN RESULTS IN 79 CITATIONS

RIVERSIDE, CA – A collaborative effort between Riverside Police, Riverside Fire, and the City's Code Enforcement Division resulted in 79 administrative citations for illegal fireworks, up from 65 in 2025, resulting in a 22% increase from last year, each carrying a \$1,500 fine. There was a total of 62 extra patrol requests conducted at city parks and other identified hot spots throughout the city by Riverside PD and Riverside Fire Department. These efforts resulted in a total of 51 pounds of fireworks being seized.

With the support of amended Riverside Municipal Code sections 1.18.010, 1.18.020, and 1.18.040, small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) were used in the days leading up to and on July 4th to assist police, fire, and code enforcement teams in detecting, recording, and documenting illegal fireworks violations from the air. Five enforcement teams were positioned throughout the city, focusing on areas with a history of high illegal fireworks activity, as well as locations identified through dispatch calls and 311 Call Center complaints.

When a sUAS recorded a violation, teams collected video evidence to pinpoint the property of origin. Before issuing a citation, each case was carefully verified by the sUAS operator, visual observer, code enforcement officer, and often additional police and fire personnel.

From June 27th to July 4th, the City of Riverside's Public Safety Communications Center received 452 calls for service related to fireworks, down from 547 in 2025. The 311 Call Center saw an increase, with 450 complaints compared to 431 last year. To avoid overwhelming public safety dispatchers, residents have been encouraged to report illegal fireworks through the 311 mobile app, online, or by phone. The 311 Call Center handled 39% of the firework calls on the 4th of July.

Riverside Fire Chief Steve Mckinster emphasized the importance of community responsibility: "With the continued hot and dry conditions, we ask every member of our community to make safety their top priority. Every firework, especially illegal fireworks, has the potential to cause life changing injuries, ignite destructive fires, and put families, homes, businesses, and first responders at risk. In Riverside, a single firework can quickly spark a vegetation fire that threatens entire neighborhoods, particularly during our hot, dry summer conditions. By making responsible choices, we can protect lives, safeguard property, and ensure everyone enjoys a safe and memorable summer."

"Drone technology has become an important public safety tool in addressing illegal fireworks," said Riverside Police Chief Larry Gonzalez. "It allows our officers to safely identify violations, gather evidence, and hold individuals accountable, while reducing unnecessary risks to police officers, firefighters, and the community."

The City of Riverside remains committed to keeping the community safe through proactive enforcement, public education, and continued use of small Unmanned Aerial Systems. Fireworks are illegal within city limits year-round, and violators will be held accountable. To report illegal fireworks, use the 311 app, visit the City's website, or call 311.

For Media Use: Click on the following link for violations captured by the small Unmanned Aerial Systems on the Fourth of July - <https://youtu.be/5gM-3ZHw1yU>

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