



NEWS ADVISORY

June 30, 2017

For immediate release

CITY PLANS FIREWORKS LAW ENFORCEMENT

The use of most fireworks in the city of Missoula is illegal, and City leaders ask for cooperation from citizens to help keep Missoula safe during the Independence Day holiday.

The Missoula City Council and Mayor John Engen hear complaints from residents every year and ask for enforcement and protection from the Police and Fire departments to the extent of their resources. Fireworks start fires, endangering property in town and bringing the risk of wildland fires. They cause injuries and are part of hospital emergency departments' busiest day of the year. They cause many dogs to become frightened, lost and injured, creating Missoula Animal Control's busiest day of the year and extra demands on the shelter at the Humane Society of Western Montana. And they frighten and disturb people.

Fireworks are prohibited in the city, on City open space lands, on all U.S. Forest Service lands, within County parks and County-managed recreation areas and at all Fish, Wildlife and Parks fishing access sites. All of the Fort Missoula area, including the new Fort Missoula Regional Park, are within the city and subject to city ordinances.

Police officers will enforce fireworks laws through the weekend and the Fourth of July. Fire Department firefighters will staff engines throughout the city. Firefighters as well as police officers have the authority to issue citations. The penalties are \$100 plus court costs for a first offense and \$300 plus court costs for a second offense during the same calendar year as the first offense.

The Fireworks Report Line, operated by the emergency dispatchers at the city-county Office of Emergency Management's Missoula 9-1-1 Center, is working 24 hours a day through July 4. **To report violations, call 258-4850.** Officers will respond to as many complaints as possible.

The Missoula City Council amended the fireworks ordinance in fall of 2013 to allow the sale and

discharge of “novelty” fireworks in the city. Those include sparklers, party poppers and other small fireworks. Visit the City website for a complete description:

<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1763/Fireworks>

Professional public displays, which are allowed by permit from the Missoula Fire Department chief, are done safely at pre-determined times and are short in duration. Public displays in Missoula will be held on July 3 at the civic stadium after the Osprey baseball game and on July 4 at the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

The City of Missoula Communications office is distributing information through advertising in the Missoulian newspaper in the print and online editions; radio advertising on-air and online; information on the City website; City social media; and news coverage.

Ginny Merriam, communications director, City of Missoula, 552-6007 (office), 546-7692 (cell)

#

Ginny Merriam, Public Information/Communications Director, 552-6007 office; 546-7692 cell