



NEWS ADVISORY

June 25, 2019

For immediate release

CITY PLANS FIREWORKS LAW ENFORCEMENT

The City of Missoula reminds the public that 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.

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, is within the city, and police officers and firefighters will watch the area for fireworks violations. In addition, fireworks are now illegal in the newly annexed areas on the west end of the city.

Police officers will provide extra enforcement of fireworks laws through the days surrounding the Fourth of July holiday on Thursday. 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 from June 28 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 2014 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:

<https://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 Southgate Mall.

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

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.

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