



City of Salinas Fireworks Enforcement Operations – After Action Report

August 26

2025

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EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Examples:

AAR	After Action Report
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
COS	City of Salinas
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
SFD	Salinas Fire Department
SPD	Salinas Police Department
SCE	Salinas Code Enforcement
SPW	Salinas Public Works
OCA	Office of the City Attorney
ECD	Emergency Communications Department
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Command
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
NGEN	Next Generation Emergency Network
RP	Reporting Party

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the various strategies used to enforce current laws and ordinances respective of illegal fireworks in the City of Salinas and will serve to highlight the relative successes and areas for improvement for future operations.

Focus:

- ☒ Prevention / public outreach
- ☒ Enforcement of illegal activity
- ☒ Incident Response / mitigation

Classification:

- ☒ Unclassified
- ☐ For Official Use Only (FOUO)
- ☐ By Invitation Only

Operation, Activity or Scenario:

- ☒ Fire
- ☒ Law Enforcement Action
- ☐ Severe Weather
- ☐ Hazardous Material Release
- ☐ Bomb Threat
- ☐ Medical Emergency
- ☐ Evacuation
- ☐ Lockdown
- ☐ Special Event
- ☐ Exercise/Drill
- ☐ Other

Statistical information for this report was collected from CAD records, and the various reporting platforms for the period of June 1, 2025 through July 12, 2025.

AFTER ACTION REPORT OVERVIEW

This report is a compilation of information from the different departments and staff who participated in the enforcement operations and public outreach campaigns. The information was gathered by the Salinas Fire Department (SFD), the Salinas Police Department (SPD), Salinas Public Works Department (SPW), Monterey County Emergency Communications Department (ECD), and other City staff.

The overall strategy for the public outreach campaign and enforcement plan was a collaborative effort on behalf of the SFD Prevention Division and other City departments.

The recommendations in this AAR should be viewed with considerable attention to the needs for a safe and livable community. In some cases, departments may determine that the benefits of implementation are insufficient to outweigh cost or pose a considerable safety risk for staff or the public. In other cases, departments may identify alternative solutions that are more effective. However, each department should review the recommendations and determine the most appropriate action and time needed for implementation.

The issues addressed in this AAR should be reviewed and thoroughly examined for the appropriation of needed resources to ensure the functions of incident response, stabilization and enforcement are safe, efficient, and effective.

Operational Overview:

Starting on June 1st, a multi-media campaign was launched to increase involvement from residents in the reporting of illegal fireworks use. Building on the positive outcome realized in 2018 and 2019, large signs were again placed at key intersections throughout the city promoting the various methods of reporting illegal fireworks use. This was further publicized in a broad social media campaign, print press, and broadcast news outlets. A detailed statistical analysis is attached.

This campaign proved ongoing success in routing complaints received through the www.salinasfireworks.com website, the “Salinas Connect” application, as well as the voicemail and text tip line.

Fireworks



The Fire Prevention Office plays a pivotal role in overseeing various aspects of fire safety, including the regulation of fireworks activities. Through meticulous monitoring, the office ensures compliance with regulations governing the operation of fireworks lottery stands, verifying that only approved vendors sell “safe and sane” fireworks in designated areas. Additionally, the office diligently reviews fireworks citations issued by enforcement teams, assessing the effectiveness of enforcement measures and identifying areas for improvement. Moreover, the Fire Prevention Office prioritizes fire safety education and awareness campaigns, providing valuable resources and guidance to the community to mitigate fire risks associated with fireworks usage. By vigilantly supervising these critical components—fireworks lottery stands, citations, and fire safety—the office fosters a safer environment for all residents, promoting responsible firework practices and reducing the potential for fire-related incidents.

Fireworks Lottery Stands

+

Fireworks Citations

+

Fireworks Safety

+

Report Fireworks

—



Based on the lessons learned from the previous fireworks seasons in 2020 through 2024, undercover patrols, along with marked vehicles, were deployed on the holiday to corroborate citizen tips from the Salinas Connect app, salinasfireworks.com website, voicemail, and text reports.



All members of the 2025 Fireworks Enforcement Task Force coordinated with one another via telecommunication related means, resources patrolled areas where increased activity was evident and collected evidence to support the issuance of administrative citations after the fact.

Citizen participation in reporting illegal fireworks slightly increased as compared to last year. This increase can be attributed to multiple factors including success of our campaign, inflation across many sectors like fuel and fireworks, and the holiday falling on a Friday. The “Salinas Connect”

application served as the primary repository for all illegal fireworks reports and residents could upload pictures and video evidence to support the reports.

ADMINISTRATIVE CITATIONS

For the period of June 1st through July 12th, the total number of Administrative Citations referred to the Office of City Attorney was 96.

Administrative fines remained unchanged from the previous year at \$1,250 for the “Use, Possession, or Sale of Illegal Fireworks” and \$250 for the “Noise Violation” totaling a minimum citation of \$1,500.

In some cases, multiple fines were assessed where illegal activity was documented over several days. The highest single citation amount was \$10,250.

Disputed citations are managed and heard in accordance with the City of Salinas Municipal Code. The Fire Prevention Division coordinates the Administrative Hearing process with the necessary parties.

Statistical Information:

Duration: June 1st – July 12th, 2025

Funding Sources

	2024	2025	% Change
<i>“Safe & Sane” retail fireworks booth application fees:</i>	\$7,933	\$8,226	3.64%
<i>“Safe & Sane” fireworks retail sales surcharges (7% of gross):</i>	*\$51,115	\$52,631	2.97%
<i>Illegal fireworks fines collected through Administrative Citations:</i>	\$58,126	\$82,500	41.93%
<i>Total Estimated Revenue</i>	\$117,174	\$143,357	22.35%

* Information as provided by wholesalers TNT and Phantom Fireworks.

Enforcement and Education Expenses

	2024	2025	% Change/Difference
<i>City Staff Overtime:</i>	\$16,628	\$17,605.52	5.88%
<i>Drone Equipment:</i>	\$14,996	\$0.00	100%
<i>Video Equipment:</i>	\$1,100	\$0.00	100%
<i>Outside Services:</i>	\$12,561	\$15,360	22.28%
<i>Vehicle Rental:</i>	\$1,411	\$1,386	1.77%
<i>Sign Printing:</i>	\$0.00	\$3,277.50	327%
<i>Total Expenses:</i>	\$46,696	\$37,629.02	19.42%

FIREWORKS SALES AND SURCHARGE



Group Name (15)	Net Sales	Retail Sales	7% Surcharge
Alisal HS Booster Club	\$18,526.80	\$37,053.60	\$2,593.75
Everett Alvarez Athletic Booster Club	\$22,747.00	\$45,494.00	\$3,184.58
CHP #730 Squad Club	\$23,950.02	\$47,900.04	\$3,353.00
Rancho San Juan HS Booster Club	\$20,659.12	\$41,318.24	\$2,892.28
Victory Outreach- Salinas	\$20,058.36	\$40,116.72	\$2,808.17
Kammann PTO	\$7,704.50	\$15,409.00	\$1,078.63
Madonna Del Sasso School	\$21,871.11	\$43,742.22	\$3,061.96
Unity Care Group	\$19,124.98	\$38,249.96	\$2,677.50
Notre Dame High School	\$21,886.63	\$43,773.26	\$3,064.13
Salinas Colts Broncos Football	\$20,919.38	\$41,838.76	\$2,928.71
SHS Athletic Booster Club	\$34,889.80	\$69,779.60	\$4,884.57
Rotary Club of Salinas Alisal	\$14,523.96	\$29,047.92	\$2,033.35
North Salinas HS Booster Club	\$27,133.19	\$54,266.38	\$3,798.65
El Gabilan School	\$10,825.45	\$21,650.90	\$1,515.56
SHS Athletic Booster Club	\$20,536.64	\$41,073.28	\$2,875.13
TOTALS:	\$305,356.94	\$610,713.88	\$42,749.97



Group Name (3)	Net Sales	Retail Sales	7% Surcharge
Family & Faith Ministries of CA/ Celebration Church	\$21,674.35	\$43, 348.70	\$3,034.41
Lincoln Elementary School PTO	\$16,119.25	\$32,238.50	\$2,256.70
Mount Toro High Parent Booster	\$32,784.53	\$65,569.06	\$4,589.83
TOTALS:	\$70,578.13	\$141,156.26	\$9,880.94

Salinas Fire Department Operations

During this period in 2025, SFD responded to nearly 1,602 emergency incidents. A breakdown of the fire incidents with previous years' data is provided as follows:

	2023	2024	2025
<i>Structure Fires:</i>	15	13	7
<i>Vegetation Fires:</i>	62	61	48
<i>Misc. Fire (Dumpsters, etc.):</i>	18	60	53
<i>Totals:</i>	95	134	108

For the 4th of July holiday period, SFD's staffing consisted of 1 member of Fire Administration, 7 members of Fire Prevention, 8 SFD Drone Pilots, and additional city staff to respond to increased calls for service and patrol the target threat areas.

The Salinas Police Department provided 1 Sergeant and 4 patrol units with 2 officers in each vehicle.

14 additional city employees assisted with illegal fireworks patrols. Those departments included: Community Development, City Clerk's Office, Library Services, Information Systems, and Public Works.

Salinas Fire responded to numerous calls for service on 4th of July to include 7 structure fires, 48 vegetation fires, and numerous other calls.

STRENGTHS

- ❖ Adequate funding from existing fees, surcharges, and fines.
- ❖ Participation from the City employees alleviated the excessive burden of limited SFD and SPD resources.
- ❖ Comprehensive media coverage including ad campaigns on all platforms such as television, radio, social media, and signs.
- ❖ Citizen-based tips from the “neighborhood approach” using Salinas Connect and fireworks hotline.
- ❖ Undercover operations to “observe and report” led to Administrative Citations with better evidentiary documentation.
- ❖ Integration of the Salinas Connect reporting platform provided detailed information for follow-up.
- ❖ Additional signage was placed at high visibility areas and intersections of the city.
- ❖ Advance warnings sent to addresses where illegal fireworks were reported last year helped to deter activity in certain areas.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- ❖ Collection and sorting of data from various sources of intelligence remains a manual process and is labor intensive.
- ❖ Manual review of video evidence is also time consuming and delays issuance of Administrative Citations and pulls staff from normal job functions.
- ❖ Means of collecting accurate evidence.
- ❖ More real time integration between tips and enforcement, starting in June.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Increase utilization of Drone Teams (SPD and SFD) on future July 4th Holidays.
- ❖ Continue to utilize additional city employees, willing to observe, report and collect evidence.
- ❖ Increase sharing of regional resources to target illegal fireworks sales.
- ❖ Increase publicity of undercover activity and citation statistics in traditional and social media.
- ❖ Continue attempts to engage neighborhood groups and citizens in “observe and report” roles.
- ❖ Work with community groups to establish a community-based organized fireworks display to discourage “at-home” use of illegal fireworks.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Continued collaborative efforts in this years’ campaign proved to be a positive influence toward curbing illegal fireworks use in the City of Salinas. The goal of these programs continues to focus on changing social consciousness at the individual and neighborhood level. It should be acknowledged that this is an ongoing process over several years but marked decreases in activity were noted this year.

The improvement in the quality of citizen reports is a positive indicator of the success of these efforts. The increase in citations with actionable evidence is another product of better collaboration between City departments in a coordinated fashion.

Future years’ plans will build on these successes. The City staff will remain engaged with constituents to discuss and implement recommendations to bring about a social change and improve the quality of life for the residents of Salinas.

IMPROVEMENT PLANNING MATRIX

IMPROVEMENT PLANNING MATRIX

<u>Area of Improvement</u>	<u>Improvement Action</u>	<u>Responsible Party/Areas</u>	<u>Targeted Completion Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
1) Neighborhood Involvement	Solicit more participation in outreach and volunteer patrol	Council/Community Safety Div.	4/2026	Ongoing
2) Limited Patrol Staffing	Increase staffing where possible	SFD/SPD	7/2028	Ongoing
3) Integration with “Salinas Connect”	Further refine automated responses and reports	Administration Div./SFD Prevention Div.	5/2019	100% complete
4) Data Collection and Sorting	Staff collaboration to merge data sources	Administrative Div./SFD Prevention	6/2019	100% complete
5) Multi-Unit Dwelling Enforcement	Identify better methods for citations of individuals	SFD/City Attorney/ SPD/SCE	1/2028	Ongoing
6) Limited Administrative Support	Identify existing staff resources to assist	SFD/Administrative Div./FW/ SCE/ City Attorney	10/2028	In-process