

City of Salinas Fireworks Enforcement Operations – After Action Report

August 8

2023

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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, 2023 through July 15, 2023.

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), Salinas Code Enforcement Department, the Salinas Police Department (SPD), Salinas Public Works Department (SPW), Monterey County Emergency Communications Department (ECD), Mag One Media Group, 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, in collaboration with the City Council Fireworks Sub-Committee.

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.

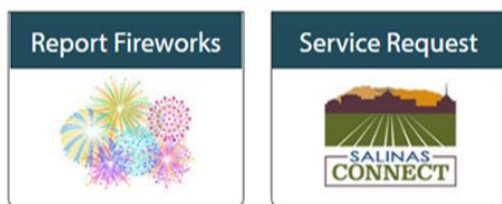
Operational Overview:

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 SAFETY

HOME » OUR CITY SERVICES » FIRE DEPARTMENT » FIRE PREVENTION » FIREWORKS SAFETY



Celebrate Safely with Safe and Sane Fireworks in Salinas

Help us keep our community safe this Fourth of July -- report illegal and unsafe fireworks and those putting others in danger. Use **SalinasCONNECT** (click "**Request Service**" and give us as much info as possible), call our tip line, or text us a photo and the address of the violation. Together we can keep Salinas safe this holiday and have a great July 4th.

Call us: 758-7475

Text us: 758-7475

How Do I...

Find Out

Find fire safety info for kids?

Keep your children safe by talking to them about fire...

Find a neighborhood firehouse?

Use this interactive map to find out the firehouse that...

Prepare for a disaster?

Take the time to review the following links and prepare...

view all in Fire
Department

Based on the lessons learned from the previous fireworks seasons in 2020, 2021, and 2022, 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 2023 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 Monday. 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. Home surveillance systems captured several instances of illegal activity.

ADMINISTRATIVE CITATIONS

For the period of June 1st through July 15th, the total number of Administrative Citations referred to the Office of City Attorney was 110.

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 \$37,500.

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 15th, 2023

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
“Safe & Sane” retail fireworks booth application fees:	\$6,905	\$6,761*
“Safe & Sane” fireworks retail sales surcharges (7% of gross):	\$76,595	\$71,400*
Illegal fireworks fines collected through Administrative Citations:	\$70,170	\$55,517
Total Estimated Revenue	\$153,670	\$134,430

*- Information as provided by wholesalers TNT and Phantom Fireworks.

Enforcement and Education Expenses

	2022	2023
Fire Department Overtime:	\$14,645	\$6,114
Police Department Overtime:	\$10,129	\$0.00
Code Enforcement Overtime:	\$752	\$788
Public Works Overtime:	\$918	\$2,964
MoCo 911 Overtime:	N/A – Limited Staff	N/A – Limited Staff
Outside Services:	\$17,850	\$8,720
Vehicle Rental:	\$1,478	\$1,153
Sign Printing:	N/A	\$3,500
Movie Theater Ads	N/A	N/A
Video Equipment	N/A	N/A
Total Expenses:	\$45,772	\$23,239

FIREWORKS SALES AND SURCHARGE



Loc #	GROUPS (12)	NET SALES	RETAIL SALES (On Form)	7% SURCHG
CNR0001	Alisal HS Booster Club	\$39,119	\$78,239	\$5,477
CNR0002	Everett Alvarez Athletic Booster Club	\$39,093	\$78,186	\$5,473
CNR0003	CHP 730 Squad Club	\$24,899	\$49,798	\$3,486
CNR0008	Gil Basketball Academy (GBA)	\$35,878	\$71,756	\$5,023
CNR0009	Victory Outreach- Salinas	\$13,706	\$27,412	\$1,919
CNR0010	Rancho San Juan HS Booster Club	\$30,088	\$60,176	\$4,212
CNR0011	Madonna Del Sasso School	\$38,685	\$77,371	\$5,416
CNR0012	Legal Services for Seniors	\$0	\$0	\$0
CNR0013	Notre Dame High School	\$18,291	\$36,582	\$2,561
CNR0014	Reclaim for the Future	\$27,952	\$55,905	\$3,913
CNR0015	SHS Athletic Booster Club	\$48,392	\$96,783	\$6,775
CNR0018	The Rock of Salinas	\$16,713	\$33,427	\$2,340
CNR0019	North Salinas HS Booster Club	\$43,999	\$87,999	\$6,160
CNR0023	Sherwood School	\$18,818	\$37,635	\$2,634
CNR0026	Palma High School	\$29,644	\$59,287	\$4,150
TOTALS		\$425,278	\$850,555	\$59,539



Organization Name	Net Sales	Retail Sales	7% Surcharge
Confidence Pregnancy Center	\$ 25,607.81	\$ 51,215.62	\$ 3,585.09
Ernie Camacho Educational Foundation	\$ 33,265.32	\$ 66,530.64	\$ 4,657.14
Mt. Toro HS	\$ 25,853.74	\$ 51,707.48	\$ 3,619.52
Totals:	\$ 84,726.87	\$ 169,453.74	\$ 11,861.75

Salinas Fire Department Operations

During this period in 2023, SFD responded to nearly 2,127 emergency incidents. A breakdown of the fire incidents with previous years' data is provided as follows:

	2022	2023
Structure Fires:	56	15
Vegetation Fires:	40	62
Misc. Fires (Dumpsters, etc.):	38	18
Total:	134	95

For the 4th of July holiday period, SFD's staffing consisted of 2 members of Fire Administration, 5 members of Fire Prevention, a couple of firefighters for the newly formed SFD Drone Team, 1 Chief Officer to supervise the crew, and additional city staff to respond to increased calls for service and patrol the target threat areas.

The Salinas Police Department this year due to staffing did not participate in fireworks enforcement outside of normally assigned daily staff.

Code Enforcement added three additional members to observe and report.

Salinas Fire responded to numerous calls for service on 4th of July. SFD was dispatched to more than five vegetation fires, sent resources to Gonzales on a mutual aid request for a structure fire, and assisted with a firework related call in the Bolsa Knolls area.

STRENGTHS

- ❖ Adequate funding from existing fees, surcharges, and fines.
- ❖ Participation from the Code Enforcement Division and Public Works Departments 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 support.
- ❖ 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

- ❖ Participation from organized neighborhood and citizens’ groups was solicited with little to no response or action.
- ❖ Limited staff was physically available for patrols.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Sharing of text and voice tips to salinasfireworks.com will improve with assistance from IT.
- ❖ More real time integration between tips and enforcement, starting in June.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Continue attempts to engage neighborhood groups and citizens in “observe and report” roles and the distribution of signage.
- ❖ Increase publicity of undercover activity and citation statistics in traditional and social media.
- ❖ Consider a “reward” system for tips leading to successful citation of individuals and property owners where illegal fireworks are used. Rewards could be funded with successfully collected fines.
- ❖ Work with community groups to establish a community-based organized fireworks display to discourage “at-home” use of illegal fireworks.
- ❖ Increase utilization of Drone Teams (SPD and SFD) on future July 4th Holidays.

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 and the Council Fireworks Subcommittee and 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

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<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.	4/2022	Ongoing
2) Limited Patrol Staffing	Increase staffing where possible	SFD/SPD/SCED	7/2022	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
Multi-Unit Dwelling Enforcement	Identify better methods for citations of individuals	SFD/City Attorney/ SPD/SCE/ Council FW Subcommittee	1/2022	Ongoing
5) Limited Administrative Support	Identify existing staff resources to assist	SFD/Administrative Div./FW Sub-Committee/ SCE/ City Attorney	10/2022	In-process