



NEWS ADVISORY

July 1, 2013

For immediate release

CITY PLANS EXTRA FIREWORKS LAW ENFORCEMENT

The use of fireworks in the city of Missoula is illegal, and this season City leaders are serious about enforcement.

The Missoula City Council and Mayor John Engen have asked for vigorous enforcement this year in response to complaints from citizens. Fireworks are upsetting to war veterans; cause many lost and injured dogs, creating Missoula Animal Control's busiest day of the year; cause injuries and are part of hospital emergency departments' busiest day of the year; start fires, endangering property in town and bringing the risk of wildland fires; and generally disturb the peace.

"Just like clockwork, every July 5th we hear how fireworks terrified folks' pets and disturbed the peace throughout Missoula's neighborhoods," said City Council representative Dave Strohmaier. "Simply focusing on education has not worked in the past, so the City is ramping up enforcement this 4th of July. The take-home message: If you choose to light it, expect to receive a ticket."

Police Department and Fire Department leaders have responded by scheduling extra police officers and firefighters during the holiday week, beginning Monday evening. The Fireworks Report Line, operated by the emergency dispatchers at the city-county Office of Emergency Management's Missoula 9-1-1 Center, is operating July 1-7. **To report violations, call 258-4850.**

The Missoula City Council recently approved revisions to the City's fireworks ordinance. 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.

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.

“Let’s leave fireworks to the professionals,” said City Council President Marilyn Marler.

Council representatives Marler and Strohmaier are available for interviews as their schedules permit.

Dave Strohmaier: 529-5580

Marilyn Marler: 544-7189

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