



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS CAUTION CITIZENS ON EXTREME FIRE DANGER RELATED TO FIREWORKS USE; LOCAL ORDINANCES AID ENFORCEMENT**

**County and City Ordinances Hold Fireworks Users Accountable for Damages Caused**

**CONCORD, CALIF., June 22, 2022** – Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire), East Contra Costa Fire Protection District and law enforcement agencies across the county today warned residents about the extreme dangers of fireworks use in current critically high fire danger conditions and reminded of the county ordinance enacted last year, along with numerous city ordinances, that strengthen enforcement abilities, in a presentation in Concord today.

Fire and law enforcement leaders reminded residents and visitors that all fireworks, regardless of type or labeling, are illegal everywhere in the county. There are no “Safe & Sane” fireworks, regardless of labeling, they are all dangerous and uncontrollable. Additionally, the potential for serious injury posed by these illegal devices and the risk of causing catastrophic wildfires during this time of extremely high fire danger is great.

On June 21, 2022, Con Fire investigators announced fireworks were the cause of a four-alarm overnight grassfire that burned 120 acres, threatened some 100 homes with destruction, and forced the evacuation of 2,200 residents. As of today, the fire remains under investigation.

Last year, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors adopted a new fireworks ordinance ([Chapter 44-2 of the County Ordinance Code](#)) strengthening regulations regarding the possession, manufacture, sale, use, and discharge of fireworks in the unincorporated areas of the County. Under the new ordinance, property and vessel owners are responsible for ensuring use of fireworks does not occur on their property and may be liable for ordinance violations if use does occur. Violations of the ordinance are subject to an initial fine of \$100, \$200 for a second violation within one year, and \$500 for each additional violation within one year.

Similar city ordinances establish the illegality of fireworks in their communities and set violation fines.

“The only safe and sane approach to fireworks in Contra Costa County is to simply not use them,” said Fire Chief Lewis Broschard, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. “As we saw just last week in Pittsburg, they are uncontrollable and dangerous, illegal, and their use – especially in our current drought conditions – is irresponsible posing the very real possibility of causing wildland fires that could easily destroy homes and threaten lives in this time of critically high fire risk.”

“The severe drought underscores the danger fast-moving fires pose to life and property. The use of illegal fireworks is strictly prohibited in Contra Costa County and we as residents need to remain committed to preventing their use,” said Diana Becton, Contra Costa District Attorney. “My office will work vigilantly with our law enforcement partners to curtail the use of illegal fireworks. Those who engage in acts of unlawful burning that put our communities in danger will face legal jeopardy.”

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## COUNTY FIRE AND LAW OFFICIALS WARN OF FIREWORKS DANGERS – 2/2/2

“The women and men of the Antioch Police Department want to remind everyone that ALL fireworks are illegal in the City of Antioch, even those marked ‘safe and sane,’” said Police Chief Steve Ford, Antioch Police Department. “Every year numerous unnecessary injuries and fires are caused by people setting off fireworks. Additionally, numerous family pets are startled by the noise of fireworks, escape and become lost. Please do your part this 4th of July to ensure everyone can enjoy a safe and happy holiday.”

“The Brentwood Police Department is committed to collaborating with Con Fire and our neighboring agencies to prevent and enforce fireworks violations. All fireworks are illegal in the County and in the City of Brentwood,” said Captain Doug Silva, Brentwood Police. “Unfortunately, this year we’ve already experienced a tragic accident as a result of children playing with illegal fireworks and our goal is to ensure this doesn’t happen again.” Silva added, “Please enjoy the legal fireworks displays throughout the County and have a happy, safe 4th of July holiday celebrating our Nation’s independence.”

“Already several weeks into what promises to be a high-risk fire season, we want to remind residents of the very real dangers involved with illegal fireworks,” said Lafayette Police Chief Ben Alldritt. “We owe it to our friends, families, and neighbors to be safe and avoid fireworks risks this Fourth of July holiday -- the City of Lafayette wants everyone to be safe and avoid fireworks-related accidents and fires.”

“The Oakley Police Department stands ready to enforce all laws related to firework violations,” said Chief Paul Beard, Oakley Police Department. “In addition to all associated firework laws, the Oakley Municipal Code allows for a fine of \$1,000 for any unlawful use, discharge, possession, storage or sale of fireworks.”

“The 4th of July is a time to celebrate with our community and family. Let’s enjoy this year without the fear of illegal fireworks injuring someone or starting a fire,” said Chief Brian Addington, Pittsburg Police Department. “Pittsburg Police officers will be out in force this holiday rapidly responding to illegal fireworks calls. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy and will cite or arrest anyone in violation of the city of Pittsburg Fireworks Ordinance.”

“Our great nation’s Independence Day is something we can all celebrate. We encourage our community to come and celebrate Richmond’s fireworks display on July 3rd and ask that all of our community respect each other’s right to safety and tranquility by not engaging in the use of illegal fireworks,” said Acting Chief Louie Tirona, Richmond Police Department.

“We hope that you are having a fun and safe summer. As the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday approaches, we would like to remind you that all fireworks are dangerous and illegal in the City of San Pablo,” said Chief Ron Raman, San Pablo Police Department. “Please come and enjoy our daytime July 4<sup>th</sup> family celebration at the Community Center. Our police department will be working closely with our partners to enforce any violations of the law. Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.”

“Although we want everyone to enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we want to remind our community ‘no fireworks means no fireworks,’” said Chief Jamie Knox, Walnut Creek Police Department. “In Contra Costa County, all fireworks are illegal, even those deemed ‘safe and sane’ in surrounding counties. Also, our county supervisors passed an ordinance last year holding the property owner liable for damages if their use of illegal fireworks causes fire or injuries. Help us protect our homes, wildlife, environment, and each other. Enjoy Independence Day in a very safe way!”

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## COUNTY FIRE AND LAW OFFICIALS WARN OF FIREWORKS DANGERS – 3/3/3

Several fireworks fires have already been sparked this year with drought conditions and prolonged warm, dry and windy weather, making fire danger unusually high and making fireworks an even greater threat to our communities than in wetter and cooler years.

In May of 2021, a major fire in Antioch started by a single firework caused the destruction of eight apartments and the displacement of some 40 residents. Numerous additional fires throughout the area that year were also caused by, or suspected of being caused by, fireworks.

Because of prolonged drought conditions, communities across the District have experienced a 75% increase in grass and vegetation fires this year as compared to two years ago. The increase since 2021 is 20%. This year, 753 grass, vegetation and exterior fires have burned across the District. Last year, Con Fire responded to nearly 100 such fires during the entire Independence Day weekend, July 2 – 5, alone. More than a dozen of these fires are known to have been caused by fireworks while the majority were suspected of being fireworks-caused.

Officials strongly encourage residents to attend official public fireworks shows rather than turn to illegal fireworks use for their Independence Day celebrations. Other alternatives include watching fireworks displays on television or online video, using safe and readily available glow-stick products, or the many other ways of safely celebrating. Con Fire will publish a list of all Fire Marshal-approved Contra Costa County displays in late June.

Fire and law officials urge residents to protect their homes, families, and neighborhoods by reporting all use of illegal fireworks immediately to their local law enforcement agency's non-emergency phone line. In cases of fires or where immediate risk to life or property exists, 911 should be called.

In addition to fire danger, there are significant risks of serious injury or death. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, an Antioch resident was severely injured handling a supposedly "Safe & Sane" firework discarded at his place of business. Nationwide, thousands are injured annually, more than half are under 15.

For more on protecting homes and businesses from wildfires, visit [www.cccfpd.org/wildfireprep](http://www.cccfpd.org/wildfireprep).

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**About Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (Con Fire)** -- A recognized fire service leader – Con Fire provides fire and emergency medical services to some 625,000 residents in nine cities and five unincorporated areas across our 304 square-mile jurisdiction. With few exceptions, county emergency ambulance transport services are provided by Con Fire through our unique sub-contractor Alliance model across the District and beyond to include some 520 square miles of the County. In 2021, the District responded to more than 141,000 incidents of all types, including some 55,000 fire and EMS emergencies, and dispatched nearly 100,000 ambulances, providing expert medical care on more than 75,000 ambulance transports. The District, with 26 fire stations and more than 400 employees, is dedicated to preserving life, property, and the environment.

**Media Contact:** Steve Hill, Public Information Officer, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, (925) 532-6512

**For incident-related media queries 24/7, please call our On-Call PIO Line at 925-660-PIO1 (7461)**



## FACT SHEET

### CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AND CITY FIREWORKS ORDINANCES

#### Contra Costa County Ordinance, Chapter 44-2 - FIREWORKS

**Note**— Ord. No. 2021-19 , § II, adopted June 8, 2021, amended chapter 44-2 in its entirety to read as herein set out. Former chapter 44-2, §§ 44-2.002, pertained to similar subject matter, and derived from Ord. 72-19 § 1, 1972: prior code § 3220: Ord. 684.

**44-2.002 - Definitions.** For purposes of this chapter, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

(a)"Fireworks" has the meaning set forth in Health and Safety Code section 12511.(1)The term "fireworks" includes the following:(A)"Dangerous fireworks," as defined in Health and Safety Code section 12505.(B)"Safe and sane fireworks," as defined in Health and Safety Code section 12529.(2)The term "fireworks" excludes the following:(A)"Exempt fireworks," as defined in Health and Safety Code section 12508.(B)"Party poppers" and "snap caps," as each is defined in California Code of Regulations, Title 19, section 980.(b)"Responsible party" means any of the following:(1)A person that owns, rents, leases, or otherwise has possession of, or is in immediate control of, a residence or other private property or a vessel.(2)A person that organizes, supervises, sponsors, conducts, allows, controls, or controls access to, the possession, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, use, or discharge of fireworks at a residence or other private property or on a vessel.

If a residence or other private property is rented or leased for a period of more than thirty consecutive days, the landlord or lessor is not a responsible party unless the landlord or lessor: has possession of, or is in immediate control of, the residence or other private property; or has knowledge of the possession, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, use, or discharge of fireworks at the residence or other private property.

(c)"Vessel" has the meaning set forth in Harbors and Navigation Code section 651. (Ord. No. 2021-19 , § 2, 6-8-21)

#### **44-2.004 - Prohibition.**

No person shall possess, manufacture, sell, offer to sell, use, or discharge, any fireworks. (Ord. No. 2021-19 , § 2, 6-8-21)

#### **44-2.006 - Exceptions.**

This chapter does not prohibit the proper use of flares by railroad personnel, peace officers, fire officials, or motorists.(Ord. No. 2021-19 , § 2, 6-8-21)

#### **44-2.008 - Responsible party liability.**

A responsible party shall maintain, manage, and supervise the residence or other private property, or vessel, for which they are responsible to prevent violations of this chapter. A responsible party violates this chapter if any person possesses, manufactures, sells, offers to sell, uses, or discharges, any fireworks at the residence or other private property, or on the vessel, for which the responsible party is responsible, regardless of whether the responsible party is present when the violation occurs. (Ord. No. 2021-19 , § 2, 6-8-21)

#### **44-2.010 - Enforcement.**

The County may seek compliance with this chapter by any remedy allowed under this code and any other remedy allowed by law. (Ord. No. 2021-19 , § 2, 6-8-21)

## FACT SHEET – CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AND CITY FIREWORKS ORDINANCES – 2/2/2

### City of Antioch – § 4-6.03 FIREWORKS AND EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCES.

It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge, burn, or in any way use or possess any dangerous fireworks, such as, but not limited to, firecrackers, Roman candles, rockets, chasing squibs, sparklers, or other explosive devices or substances as defined in the Uniform Fire Code, excluding only roadway flares and paper caps with an average explosive content of less than twenty-five hundredths of a grain per cap.

('66 Code, § 4-6.03) (Ord. 508-C-S, passed 1-7-82) [Penalty, see §§ 1-2.01 et seq.](#)

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### City of Brentwood – Chapter 8.48 FIREWORKS

**8.48.010 Definition.** In this chapter “fireworks” means a device containing chemical elements and chemical compounds capable of burning independently of the oxygen of the atmosphere and producing audible, visual, mechanical, or thermal effects which are useful as pyrotechnic devices or for entertainment. The term “fireworks” includes, but is not limited to, devices designated by the manufacturer as fireworks, torpedoes, skyrockets, roman candles, rockets, Daygo bombs, sparklers, paper caps, chasers, fountains, smoke sparks, aerial bombs, and fireworks kits. ([Health and Safety Code Section 12511.](#)) (Ord. 966 § 1, 2016)

**8.48.020 Prohibition.** It is unlawful for any person to use, possess, discharge, offer for sale, store, or manufacture any fireworks in the city, unless under an exception set forth in Section 8.48.030. (Ord. 966 § 1, 2016)

**8.48.030 Exceptions.** Exceptions to this chapter are:

- A. Snap caps and party poppers (classified by the State Fire Marshal as pyrotechnic devices). (See also Section 15.06.020, Chapter 56, Explosives and Fireworks, of this code.)
  - B. The possession, transport, sale, and use of red flares (highway fuses) as a warning device.
  - C. Items that the State Fire Marshal has investigated and determined to be limited to industrial, commercial or agricultural use, when authorized by a permit issued by the city under Section 15.06.020 (Section 5601.2.1, Prohibited and Limited Acts) of this code, or by the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District under the California Fire Code.
  - D. A public fireworks display event authorized by the city under a special event permit, if that special event permit also includes a permit for fireworks issued by the city under Section 15.06.020 (Section 5608.2, Permit required) of this code, or by the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District under the California Fire Code. (Ord. 966 § 1, 2016)
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### City of Concord – 15.70.020 Fireworks

**(a) Prohibitions.** It shall be unlawful for any person to possess, transfer, manufacture, offer for sale, use, or discharge any fireworks (including “dangerous, safe, and sane” and other fireworks as defined in or pursuant to [Health and Safety Code §§ 12502--12504](#)); provided, however, that the City Council may, at any time, order or permit the public display of fireworks by qualified individuals under the direct supervision of experts in the handling of fireworks, provided such display shall be of such a character, so located and discharged, or fired as in the opinion of the Consolidated Fire District authorities as to not be hazardous to the surrounding property or dangerous to any person.

**(b) Exemption.** The possession, transport, sale, and use of highway fuses (red flares) as a railroad and highway warning device are exempt from the provisions of this section.

(Code 1965, § 3101; Code 2002, § 30-2. Ord. No. 687; Ord. No. 818; Ord. No. 976)

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## FACT SHEET – CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AND CITY FIREWORKS ORDINANCES – 3/3/3

City of Danville – [San Ramon Valley Fire Ordinance](#) #23 Section 3301.1.3

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City of Hercules and Unincorporated Rodeo – Rodeo-Hercules Fire Cal Fire Code 5601.1

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City of Lafayette – 5601.1.3 Fireworks

City of Martinez – 5601.1.3 Fireworks

The possession, manufacture, storage, sale, [handling](#) and [use](#) of [fireworks](#) are prohibited.

### Exceptions:

1. Storage and [handling](#) of [fireworks](#) as allowed in [Section 5604](#).
  2. Manufacture, [assembly](#) and testing of [fireworks](#) as allowed in [Section 5605](#) and *Health and Safety Code Division 11*.
  3. The [use](#) of [fireworks](#) for [fireworks displays pyrotechnics](#) before a [proximate audience](#) and [pyrotechnic special effects](#) in motion pictures, television, theatrical or group entertainment productions as allowed in *Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 6 Fireworks* reprinted in [Section 5608](#) and *Health and Safety Code Division 11*.
  4. The possession, storage, sale, [handling](#) and [use](#) of specific types of Division [1.4G fireworks](#) where allowed by applicable laws, ordinances and regulations, provided that such [fireworks](#) and [facilities](#) comply with NFPA 1124, CPSC 16 CFR Parts 1500 and 1507, and DOTn 49 CFR Parts 100—185, as applicable for consumer [fireworks](#) and *Health and Safety Code Division 11*.
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City of Moraga – Moraga-Orinda Fire Chapter 56. 5601.3

The possession, manufacture, storage, sale, [handling](#) and [use](#) of [fireworks](#) are prohibited.

### Exceptions:

1. Storage and [handling](#) of [fireworks](#) as allowed in [Section 5604](#).
  2. Manufacture, [assembly](#) and testing of [fireworks](#) as allowed in [Section 5605](#) and *Health and Safety Code Division 11*.
  3. The [use](#) of [fireworks](#) for [fireworks displays pyrotechnics](#) before a [proximate audience](#) and [pyrotechnic special effects](#) in motion pictures, television, theatrical or group entertainment productions as allowed in *Title 19, Division 1, Chapter 6 Fireworks* reprinted in [Section 5608](#) and *Health and Safety Code Division 11*.
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City of San Pablo – Chapter 8.42 FIREWORKS

**8.42.010 Definition.** In this chapter, “fireworks” means a device containing chemical elements and chemical compounds capable of burning independently of the oxygen of the atmosphere and producing audible, visual, mechanical, or thermal effects which are useful as pyrotechnic devices or for entertainment. The term “fireworks” includes, but is not limited to, devices designated by the manufacturer as fireworks, torpedoes, skyrockets, Roman candles, rockets, Daygo bombs, M-80s, sparklers, party poppers, paper caps, chasers, fountains, smoke sparks, aerial bombs, fireworks kits and firecrackers and any other fireworks included in the definition of fireworks found at California Health and Safety Code Section 12511. This term includes both “dangerous fireworks” as defined in California Health and Safety

## FACT SHEET – CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AND CITY FIREWORKS ORDINANCES – 4/4/4

Code Section 12505 and “safe and sane fireworks” as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 12529. (Ord. 2021-003 § 3, 2021)

**8.42.020 Prohibition.** It is unlawful for any person to use, possess, ignite, discharge, explode, display for sale, offer for sale, store, or manufacture any fireworks in the city except:

- A. Snap caps and party poppers (classified by the State Fire Marshal as pyrotechnic devices).
- B. The possession, transport, sale, and use of red flares (highway fuses) as a warning device.
- C. Exempt fireworks as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 12508.
- D. A public fireworks display event authorized by the city under a special event permit, if that special event permit also includes a permit for fireworks issued by the city or by the Contra Costa Fire Protection District under the California Fire Code. (Ord. 2021-003 § 3, 2021)

**8.42.040 Seizure.** Any peace officer or Contra Costa Fire District personnel may seize, take, remove or cause to be removed any fireworks possessed, used, stored or displayed in violation of this chapter and such fireworks determined to be illegal under this chapter may be destroyed if no appeal has been filed pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section 8.42.050 or such an appeal is ultimately resolved. (Ord. 2021-003 § 3, 2021)

**8.42.050 Penalties.** The city may seek compliance with this chapter by any remedy allowed by law or Title 1, including but not limited to:

- A. Violation of this chapter is an infraction and punishable pursuant to Chapter 1.08.
- B. Violation of this chapter is subject to administrative citations pursuant to Chapter 1.10.
- C. Violation of this chapter is deemed a public nuisance pursuant to Chapter 8.02. (Ord. 2021-003 § 3, 2021)

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