



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE AND LAW OFFICIALS CAUTION RESIDENTS ON FIRE AND INJURY DANGER RELATED TO FIREWORKS USE

County and City Ordinances Hold Property Owners Accountable for Fireworks Use and Damages Caused

CONCORD, CALIF., June 29, 2023 – Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and local law enforcement agencies across the county today warned residents about the extreme dangers of fireworks use in current high fire danger conditions – and the threat of grievous injury posed – and reminded of the county ordinance, along with numerous city ordinances, that strengthens enforcement abilities.

Fire and law officials reminded residents and visitors that all fireworks, regardless of type or labeling, are illegal everywhere in the county. There are no “safe and sane” fireworks, regardless of markings to the contrary; 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 high fire danger is great.

On April 17, 2023, a 14-year-old Pleasant Hill youth suffered serious injury to his hand as a result of handling a previously lit, but unexploded firework. June 21, 2022, Con Fire investigators determined fireworks were the cause of a four-alarm overnight grassfire that burned 120 acres, threatened 100-plus homes, and forced the evacuation of 2,200 residents – all proven evidence of the dangers fireworks present.

In 2021, 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 ordinance, property and vessel owners are responsible for any use of fireworks on their property. Violations are subject to an initial fine of \$100, \$200 for a second violation within one year, and \$500 for each additional annual violation.

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 not to use them,” said Fire Chief Lewis Broschard, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. “Numerous examples demonstrate they are uncontrollable and dangerous. In current high-fire-danger conditions, their use is nothing short of irresponsible with the very real possibility of causing life- and property-threatening wildfires and maiming injuries.”

“Fire danger remains high as we approach the Fourth of July holiday,” said Diana Becton, Contra Costa District Attorney. “My message to those who engage in unlawful activities is clear: In Contra Costa County, the use of fireworks is strictly prohibited. My office will work with our law enforcement partners to hold accountable those who put our communities in danger through acts of unlawful burning.”

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

Several fires are under investigation this year as likely having been sparked by fireworks as wet winter and spring conditions have resulted in unusually dangerous weed and vegetation growth across the county. The arrival of warm, dry weather is now making that bumper crop of vegetation an even greater danger to our communities than in past years. Illegal fireworks exacerbate the threat to homes, businesses, and residents.

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 many other ways of safely celebrating. For a list of all Con Fire-approved Contra Costa County fireworks displays, visit www.cccfpd.org and click on the 4th of July Fireworks & Safety icon.

“Fireworks aren’t just illegal, they’re dangerous. We want you to keep that and your community in mind as we approach the holiday,” said Concord Police Chief Mark Bustillos. “We wish everyone a happy and safe Fourth of July!”

“It is important to prioritize safety during holidays like the Fourth of July, especially when it comes to the use of fireworks. Illegal fireworks pose significant risks, including injuries to individuals and property damage from fires,” said Chief Steve Albanese, Pittsburg Police Department. “By actively responding to reports of illegal fireworks and implementing a zero-tolerance policy, Pittsburg Police aim to deter the use of these dangerous explosives. Those caught with illegal fireworks can expect a \$1,000 fine or even a potential arrest and jail time. These measures are intended to discourage the use of illegal fireworks and ensure the safety and well-being of the community during Fourth of July celebrations.”

Fire officials urge residents to protect their homes, families, and neighborhoods by reporting all use of illegal fireworks immediately to local law enforcement using the toll-free hotline 1-833-885-2021.

In cases of fires or where immediate risk to life or property exists, 911 should be called without hesitation.

Con Fire’s Fire Investigation Unit also asks residents to help them fight illegal fireworks use by reporting sales to the Arson Tip Line at 1-866-50-ARSON. Residents can leave a recorded message about fireworks sales, or any fire-related criminal activity in English or Spanish.

For more on protecting homes and businesses from wildfires, visit www.cccfpd.org/wildfireprep.

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About Contra Costa County Fire Protection District – With implementation of a contract for service with the City of Pinole in March, 2023 and annexation of the former East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) in July, 2022, Contra Costa Fire now provides fire and emergency medical services to more than 770,000 residents in 12 cities and 11 unincorporated areas across our expanded 557 square-mile jurisdiction. The district now comprises 33 fire stations and more than 600 employees. Through our unique ambulance “Alliance,” the district delivers EMS and ambulance transport services to much of Contra Costa County. In 2022, the district responded to nearly 100,000 incidents of all types, including 67,000 fire medical emergencies, and dispatched some 100,000 ambulances, conducting more than 75,000 ambulance transports. Contra Costa Fire remains dedicated to preserving life, property, and the environment.

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