



# NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Fire & Law Officials Warn Residents of Illegal Fireworks**

The San Bernardino County Fire Department, Fontana Police Department, Kaiser Permanente Fontana, and Arrowhead Regional Medical Center warned residents of the potential dangers of fireworks and illegal explosives during a press conference Tuesday morning at Fire Station 79 in Fontana.

The press conference was held to combat the increase of illegal firework activity prior to the Fourth of July holiday.

“San Bernardino County is a super highway for trafficking illegal and dangerous fireworks around July 4<sup>th</sup>,” Fire Marshal Mike Horton said. “In just two weeks of operations, we have stopped and seized 27,000 pounds of dangerous fireworks for entering into the county.”

Fontana PD and SBCoFD discussed fireworks safety and enforcement, and urged residents to report illegal fireworks to local law enforcement or the WeTip hotline 1-800-47-ARSON. Fines for possessing, selling or displaying illegal fireworks range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 in the City of Fontana.

“There is zero tolerance for illegal fireworks,” Fontana Police Chief Bob Ramsey said. “We will have our Special Operations Team fully staffed to patrol the streets and enforce fireworks violations.”

The City of Fontana is among a handful of cities in San Bernardino County that allow the sale of "Safe and Sane" fireworks. Safe and Sane fireworks are labeled with the State Fire Marshal seal on the outside of the packaging. Residents must comply with the city's regulations and use Safe and Sane fireworks only from June 28 to July 5 between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m.

Physicians from Kaiser Permanente Fontana and the Burn Center at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center discussed safety tips and drew attention to the severe personal injuries such as third degree burns that fireworks can cause if used incorrectly.

“The risk of fireworks injury is highest for children between the ages of 5 and 19 years old,” Dr. Alp Arkun, Chief of Service of Kaiser Emergency Department, said. “Sparklers account for 25 percent of firework-related injuries seen in emergency rooms.”

Dr. John Culhane, Director of the Edward G. Hirschman Burn Center at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, spoke to the burn injuries fireworks cause each year.

“The best way to stay out of the burn center is to follow the law. Every year we see burns from fireworks. You have to respect the ability of the fireworks to inflict a serious and life changing injury,” Dr. Culhane said.

Officials suggested following these safety guidelines if using Safe and Sane fireworks:

- Always use Safe and Sane fireworks with an adult present.
- Only use Safe & Sane fireworks approved with State Fire Marshal seal.

- Always read and follow the directions on the label.
- Use Safe & Sane fireworks outdoors only, away from dry grass and flammable materials.
- Do not give fireworks to young children under any circumstances, even a sparkler burns at 1,200 °F. Hot enough to cause 3rd degree burns.
- Light Safe and Sane fireworks one at a time.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never alter, take apart, attempt to fix, or relight malfunctioning fireworks.
- Always have a bucket of water or fire extinguisher on hand for emergencies and for dousing misfired fireworks.

Officials also encouraged residents to attend a local firework celebration held near their neighborhood. Residents can find a calendar of firework shows in San Bernardino County at the [sbcfire.org](http://sbcfire.org) homepage.

Information on the City of Fontana's 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and fireworks laws can be found at [Fontana.org](http://Fontana.org).

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