



NEWS RELEASE

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Daniel R. Munsey
Fire Chief / Fire Warden



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CONTACT: Tracey Martinez, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5950, (909) 936-5511 mobile

Fireworks Interdiction Taskforce confiscates 40,000 pounds of illegal & dangerous fireworks

San Bernardino County – Investigators from San Bernardino County Fire partnered with the Colton and Rancho Cucamonga Fire Departments to stop dangerous and illegal fireworks from entering the county. Beginning in June through July 4, 2020, investigators targeted key entry points into the county, specifically I-15 from Nevada, conducting vehicle checks and searching out illegal fireworks.

The Fireworks Interdiction Taskforce was successful in confiscating approximately 40,000 pounds of dangerous and illegal fireworks over hundreds of hours of fireworks interdiction operations. In addition to distributing hundreds of warnings, the taskforce issued 245 citations resulting in \$306,250 in fines, with fines up to \$1,250 for the first offense with the possibility of arrest.

This year, the San Bernardino County Fire Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) implemented a modern technology called the *Illegal Fireworks Reporter* to request help from the public in reporting the sale and use of illegal fireworks. With over 1,500 complaints, the Office of the Fire Marshal substantiated the use of fireworks and mobilized personnel to heavy use areas, while concentrating fire prevention and law enforcement patrols in those areas. Fire prevention officers referred complaints made in outside jurisdictions to local public safety agencies.

“The San Bernardino County Fire Department will remain vigilant each and every year to protect our communities from the risks associated with dangerous fireworks,” Fire Marshal Mike Horton said. “I want to thank the amazing men and women of the taskforce for their tireless efforts to protect the residents of San Bernardino County. We face another dangerous wildland fire season this year. San Bernardino County Fire will remain vigilant in protecting public health and safety. We want to thank the public for helping us stop those that would try to smuggle these dangerous explosives into the county. If you see something, say something. Call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-47-ARSON (1-800-472-7766) or visit WeTip.com.”

The San Bernardino County Fire Office of the Fire Marshal turns over all confiscated fireworks the State Fire Marshal’s Office for destruction.

Under California law, all fireworks that explode, shoot into the air, or move along the ground are considered dangerous and are illegal to possess without a permit. That includes firecrackers, skyrockets, roman candles, mortars, and “chasers” that dart along the ground, and safe and sane fireworks that have been modified.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, on a typical 4th of July, fireworks cause more fires in the U.S. than all other causes combined. In addition to fires, fireworks cause deaths, blindness, maiming injuries to children and adults, re-traumatize war veterans suffering from PTSD, and frighten household pets.

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