

COSTA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tom Gazsi, Chief of Police
Robert Sharpnack, Captain
Bryan Glass, Lieutenant
Keith Davis, Lieutenant

FROM: Clint Dieball, Sergeant

SUBJECT: 4th of July After-Action Report (July 1- 5, 2014)

DATE: August 4, 2014

The following is the after-action report for deployment of Police Department and other City resources for the five-day period of June 30th through July 4th. During this year's holiday period, 37 firework stands were operational compared to the same number of stands in 2013. In addition, permits were issued for 7 block party closures compared to 9 in 2013.

The Police Department accomplished the expected operational goals with no noteworthy issues. Staffing was achieved with a combination of police officers and CMFD arson investigators. Throughout the five-day period, the Police Department adequately staffed resources to; 1) handle prioritized emergency calls-for-service, 2) handle routine area calls-for-service, and 3) address specific firework related calls-for-service and proactive hot spot enforcement.

Police Department Staffing

Department staffing levels remained at normal levels from June 30th through July 3rd. To manage the increased calls for service on July 4th, additional officers were dedicated as directed enforcement (DE) units and the primary responders for all firework related CFS. July 4th staffing consisted of 25 officers during the peak firework period - 7:00 PM to 2:00 AM.

Enforcement Strategies

At the beginning of this year's firework sales period, the Police Department proactively sought out individuals who received significant complaints from their neighbors. Officers contacted and warned several residents about the dangers and criminal violations associated with the use of illegal fireworks and explosive devices.

In addition, Police Explorers teamed up with the Fire Department and handed out firework warning fliers to residents in areas deemed problematic during the 2013 holiday period. As a result, potential problems were diffused throughout the City.

The civil citation process was utilized for the enforcement of firework-related violations of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code. On July 4th, the Department fielded *firework directed enforcement units* specifically tasked with handling firework-related calls-for-service, as well as proactive enforcement of related violations. Officers issued **34** civil citations for Costa Mesa Municipal Code violations with fines totaling approximately \$5,100, compared to 38 civil citations in 2013. All citations are scheduled for Administrative Hearings on September 2, 2014.

Social Media / Public Education

The Police Department collaborated with the Fire Department in filming a new Public Service Announcement regarding the hazards associated with fireworks. This video ran on Facebook for the week preceding the holiday and was played at the City Council meeting on July 1st.

Fireworks related information and warnings were distributed by the Police Department via press release, Facebook, Twitter, and Nixle. The information was sent and posted repeatedly in the weeks leading up to the holiday.

The Police Department also secured 5 programmable roadway message boards and deployed them on major thoroughfares throughout the City. The boards flashed messages warning that illegal fireworks would be strictly enforced with fine amounts up to \$500.

Calls-For-Service (CFS)

Staff anticipated an increase in CFS this year due to the holiday falling on a Friday. For the deployment period, Communications received **470** firework-related CFS that were handled via general broadcast (GB) to area police units, compared to 428 in 2013. Officers were dispatched and responded to **92** firework-related CFS where the reporting party requested personal contact with an officer, compared to 76 in 2013. Throughout the preceding days, CFS volume was moderate with the expected increase on July 4th. CFS on July 4th generally peaked between the hours of 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM.

Two noteworthy incidents that occurred on the 4th:

- At approximately 8:55 PM, DE units responded to a major injury traffic collision involving a DUI driver. The two injured pedestrians were in the street, attempting to ignite illegal fireworks, when they were struck by the intoxicated driver. The DE Units that responded to the DUI collision were out of service for an hour and a half, while conducting the investigation and providing traffic and crowd control.

- At 11:48 PM, officers responded to the 1700 block of Westminster Avenue after a resident returned home and found a gunshot through a rear kitchen door window. The bullet ricocheted off the interior floor tile, causing damage to a wall and was later recovered loose on the ground. The round appeared to be that of a .38 caliber and likely part of 4th of July celebration.

The following table reflects CFS and citations for the 4th of July deployment periods over the last three years.

CFS	2014	2013	2012
Firework GBs	470	428	329
Officer Responses	92	76	29
Civil Citations	34	38	7

There were no noteworthy issues regarding fireworks or parties within city parks.

Arrests made:

- 2 drunk in public arrests
- 1 DUI (Felony w/injuries)
- 1 warrant
- 1 petty theft arrest
- 1 vandalism arrest

Fire Department

On July 4th, Fire Department Arson Investigators paired up with police officers to assist with investigations and to conduct fireworks enforcement. Lt. Keith Davis was responsible for liaison with Battalion Chief Kevin Diamond and Captain Brosamer, who were in charge of Fire Department operations.

This year, from July 3rd thru July 5th, the Fire Department experienced an increase in total call volume. When compared to 2013, total calls for service during the three day period increased 50%, from 88 to 132. The below table reflects the breakdown for each day.

Call Volume 2013 vs. 2014		
CFS	2014	2013
July 3 rd (00:00-23:59)	39	24
July 4 th (00:00-23:59)	42	37
July 5 th (00:00-23:59)	41	27

On July 4th, the Fire Department responded to a total of 6 firework specific incidents. These incidents included the following:

- An unfounded fire investigation call
- A dumpster fire

- A trash fire
- A minor firework related injury
- A tree fire
- A still fire

Public Services

Signs & Markings staff installed & removed approximately 46 ~~1~~No Fireworks signs in Parks signs and installed and removed 18 ~~1~~No Illegal Fireworks signs at key City entry points. Signs & Markings staff also delivered and programmed the City's programmable message board at the PD's request, and assisted in the set-up and programming of the rented message boards acquired by the PD.

Park staff adjusted sprinkler timing to 9pm in key parks, rather than 10pm, to discourage lighting of fireworks on turf areas. Park staff closed gates at Canyon Park, Fairview Park and Wakeham Park at dusk. Staff also mowed the various ~~1~~meadows in Canyon Park to reduce the risk of fire. In addition, fire breaks were mowed at the south and north ends of West Fairview Park, to provide defensible space for the Fire Department in locations adjacent to homes.

For the past few years TNT fireworks has provided clean-up of all fireworks in 8 City parks and sweeping of the associated parking lots. This service, in conjunction with the posting of all the City parks for ~~1~~No Fireworks, has virtually eliminated the impact of fireworks on City parks and the hours of clean-up required in the past. With that effort and staff's routine holiday park clean-up, the task was successfully completed.

Neighboring Agencies

We inquired with neighboring law enforcement agencies to determine the impact of fireworks in their jurisdictions. Although there were inconsistencies in data collection, no major impacts were noted. For specifics, see the below information:

Irvine Police Department:

Time Period: June 30 . July 5

CFS: 45

Cites: 0

Fountain Valley Police Department:

Time Period: June 30 . July 5

CFS: 55

Cites: 0

Newport Beach Police Department:

Time Period: Agency only collected data for July 4 (Arrests, Reports, and Cites are for multiple offenses not just firework)

CFS: 110 (directly attributed to fireworks)

Arrests: 120

Cites: 699
Reports: 23

Huntington Beach Police Department:

Did not respond to request

Santa Ana Police Department:

Did not respond to request

Recommendations

Based on an assessment of the 2014 . 4th of July After-Action Report, the following are recommendations for future deployments:

- Increase up-staffing for July 4, 2015, due to the holiday falling on a Saturday
- Continue to utilize Police and Fire Explorers in weeks prior to the holiday to increase awareness and educate the community regarding safe and sane rules, regulations and laws
- Continue to utilize the City and PD websites, and other social media resources to mass-distribute information regarding a safe & sane 4th of July
- Increase use of electronic message boards at key locations throughout the City
- Coordinate with the Mesa Consolidated Water District (MCWD) to disseminate mailers on local and state firework laws with the monthly residential billing leading up to 4th of July
- Coordinate with City Hall to create and disseminate a series of press releases focused on a safe & sane holiday, local and state laws, and strict enforcement by the Police Department
- Increase fines for illegal fireworks from \$500.00 maximum to \$1000.00
- Participate with Council suggested July 4th Review Committee

Conclusion

This was the fourth year with the increased allowable number of days to sell/purchase fireworks. The Police Department experienced an increase of approximately 10% in total firework related CFS compared to 2013. An increase in priority CFS, requiring substantial field resources for extended periods of time, attributed to a 4% decrease in total citations issued. Of the 7 city-permitted block parties, none had an adverse impact on department resources.