



# Camas Fireworks Summary

Ad hoc Committee  
Members:

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# The Issue:

- Camas City Council continues to receive messages and input from residents who are concerned about the impacts of fireworks
  - Safety and Risk- personal injury, property damage, fire risk
  - Noise- Concern in general, and specifically for residents and pets who are sensitive to noise
  - Pollution- Discharged fireworks littering roofs, streets, and parks; smoke and residue
  - Does Camas policy compound or attract additional fireworks use and sales from adjacent jurisdictions with more restrictive policies? (I.e.; Portland, Vancouver, and Washougal which limit use types and time periods)



# Objective of Subcommittee:

Assess the impact of the current Camas fireworks policy and the potential need for change to the policy



# Consumer Grade Fireworks

- Washington RCW 70.77 and WAC 212-17 allows for consumer fireworks:
  - *"Consumer fireworks" means any small firework device designed to produce visible effects by combustion and which must comply with the construction, chemical composition, and labeling regulations of the United States consumer product safety commission, as set forth in 16 C.F.R. Parts 1500 and 1507 and including some small devices designed to produce audible effects, such as whistling devices, ground devices containing 50 mg or less of explosive materials, and aerial devices containing 130 mg or less of explosive materials and classified as fireworks UN0336 by the United States department of transportation at 49 C.F.R. Sec. 172.101*
  - It is legal to sell and purchase consumer fireworks within this state from twelve o'clock noon to eleven o'clock p.m. on the twenty-eighth of June, from nine o'clock a.m. to eleven o'clock p.m. on each day from the twenty-ninth of June through the fourth of July, from nine o'clock a.m. to nine o'clock p.m. on the fifth of July, from twelve o'clock noon to eleven o'clock p.m. on each day from the twenty-seventh of December through the thirty-first of December of each year
  - Consumer fireworks may be used or discharged each day between the hours of twelve o'clock noon and eleven o'clock p.m. on the twenty-eighth of June and between the hours of nine o'clock a.m. and eleven o'clock p.m. on the twenty-ninth of June to the third of July, and on July 4th between the hours of nine o'clock a.m. and twelve o'clock midnight, and between the hours of nine o'clock a.m. and eleven o'clock p.m. on July 5th, and from six o'clock p.m. on December 31st until one o'clock a.m. on January 1st of the subsequent year
  - The City of Camas limited the discharge of fireworks to July 4th and New Year's Eve in 2018

# Legal Consumer Fireworks:



*Celebrate  
Safely  
Fireworks  
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## WASHINGTON STATE LEGAL CONSUMER FIREWORKS FOR SALE IN TENTS AND STANDS PER RCW 70.77.136

### Cylindrical Fountain

Upon ignition, a shower of colored sparks, and sometimes a whistling effect, is produced.



### Helicopters, Aerial Spinners

A propeller or blade is attached, which, upon ignition, lifts the rapidly spinning device into the air. A visible or audible effect is produced at the height of flight.



### Cone Fountain

Upon ignition, a shower of colored sparks, and sometimes a whistling effect, is produced.



### Smoke Devices

Tube or sphere containing pyrotechnic composition that, upon ignition, produces a white or colored smoke as a primary effect.



### Roman Candles

Heavy paper or cardboard tube containing pyrotechnic composition. Upon ignition, up to ten "stars" are individually expelled at several-second intervals.



### Parachutes

Upon ignition, one or more parachutes are propelled into the air with stars, smoke, and other effects being discharged as the parachute floats downward.



### Wheels

Pyrotechnic device attached to a post or tree by means of a nail or string. A wheel may contain up to six "driver" units; upon ignition, the wheel revolves, producing a shower of color and sparks and, sometimes, a whistling effect.



### Mine/Shells/Cakes

Mine – An aerial device that shoots stars into the sky in an upward spray pattern.  
Shell – A shell is an aerial item that is fired into the sky.  
Cake – Dense-packed collection of mine/shell tubes that are fused together.



### Ground Spinners

A small device similar to a wheel in design and effect. When placed on the ground and ignited, a shower of sparks and color is produced by the rapidly spinning device.



### Reloadable Mortars

A shell consisting of a container, a lift charge, a time fuse, a burst charge, and stars/effects. The lift charge propels the shell out of the tube igniting the burst charge at the right altitude, igniting the effects.



### Dipped Stick, Sparkler

Stick or wire coated with pyrotechnic composition that produces a shower of sparks upon ignition. Total pyrotechnic composition not to exceed 100 grams per item.



### Novelties

"Trick and Novelty Devices" means any small firework device not classified as a Consumer of Display Firework. Items contain a small amount of pyrotechnic composition that is friction sensitive.



# Fireworks that are ILLEGAL in Washington:



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## FIREWORK AND EXPLOSIVE DEVICES THAT ARE ILLEGAL IN WASHINGTON STATE

**Federally Legal Consumer Fireworks:** These items are legal to purchase, possess, and discharge only at an Indian Reservation. Possession and/or use off the reservation is illegal.

### Firecrackers

Generally 1/4" x 1 1/2" or less that come in packs to large bricks. A firecracker makes a single "pop" sound. Many firecrackers strung together will make repetitive "popping" sounds.



### Sky Rockets and Missiles

Similar to the Bottle Rocket, a Sky Rocket is attached to a stick or has fins and may have a plastic cap. A missile will have fins rather than a stick. Once lit, it ascends rapidly, high into the air where it explodes.



### Bottle Rockets

A firecracker type (tube) attached to a 12" long wooden stick. The stick is placed in a bottle and once lit, it rises into the air, travelling laterally before exploding.



**Illegal Explosive Devices:** The possession, manufacturing, or using of illegal Explosive Devices is a criminal offense.

### M-80's, M-100's, etc.

Illegal since the 70's, an M-80 can contain flash powder, black powder, or a composition of materials that are sensitive to shock and can injure or kill people. Can do serious permanent damage to fingers, hands, and eyes.



### Improvised Explosive Device (IED)

A pipe bomb is an improvised explosive device, consisting of a tightly sealed section of pipe that is filled with an explosive material. The pipe provides containment, meaning that a low explosive can be used to produce a relatively large explosion.



A tennis ball bomb is an improvised explosive device consisting of a tennis ball filled with combustibles or pyrotechnic material with a fuse producing a loud explosion.



### Altered Firework

Sparklers are bound together in electrical or duct tape to contain the ignition of the sparklers, providing for a loud "whoomp" sound with a flash of light.



# Aerial devices are limited to 60 mg of explosive powder

- Common "mortar" sizes are 1.75" and 2.25" in diameter; however, the 60 mg maximum applies to all



# "Safe & Sane" Fireworks

- Some jurisdictions have limited the sale and use of consumer fireworks
- These are commonly called "Safe & Sane Fireworks", but there is no consistent legal definition
- "Safe and sane" are not a brand but are types of fireworks that include: fountains, sparklers, smokeballs, snake-type fireworks, ground-spinning fireworks, pinwheels, most novelty fireworks, toy/trick noisemakers, and some crackling items—basically anything that doesn't leave the ground
- The City of Washougal defines Safe & Sane Fireworks as "those that are neither projectile nor explosive—basically anything that doesn't leave the ground"
  - This includes fountains, sparklers, smoke balls, ground spinners, pinwheels, snake-type fireworks, toy/trick noise makers, most novelty items, and some crackling items





# Number of Noise Complaints in 2023

- The following jurisdictions received fireworks-related noise complaints from June 28-July 5
  - Camas Police Department- 10 (discharge on July 4 only)
  - Washougal Police Department- 39 (Safe & Sane, July 4 only)
  - Vancouver Police Department- 143 (no fireworks allowed)
  - Clark County Sheriff's Office- 62 (discharge on July 4 only)
  - Battle Ground Police Department- 23 (discharge on July 3 and July 4)
  - Ridgefield Police department- 21 (discharge on July 4 only)

# Fireworks-related Fires in 2023

- Per CRESA (emergency dispatch center), jurisdictions had the following number of fires caused by fireworks:
  - Camas-Washougal FD: 9
  - East County Fire Rescue: 5
  - Vancouver FD (including Fire District 5) : 109
  - Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue (Ridgefield, La Center, Woodland, unincorporated Clark): 19
  - Fire District 6 (Hazel Dell, Salmon Creek, Felida): 29
  - Fire District 3 (Battle Ground, Hockinson, Brush Prairie): 13



# Rights vs. Responsibility

- Quiet neighborhoods 365 days a year vs. the ability to celebrate with fireworks twice a year
- Homes and property not being exposed to the increased risk of fire damage
- **RCW 70.77.488:** *It is unlawful for any person to discharge or use fireworks in a reckless manner which creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another person or damage to the property of another. A violation of this section is a gross misdemeanor.*
  - This RCW is rarely enforced except in situation involving gross negligence or malicious use of fireworks; fireworks fires are often written off as "accidental"
- People and pets sensitive to noise not exposed
- Responsibility to discharge fireworks in a safe and courteous manner
- Responsibility to clean up debris after discharge

# Potential Policy Options:

- Status Quo- continue the use of consumer-grade fireworks from 9:00 AM- Midnight on July 4th and 6:00 PM-1:00 AM on December 31
- Modify or limit current policy-
  - Modify hours of use on July 4 and December 31
  - Limit fireworks to "Safe & Sane" (similar to Washougal and other cities in Washington)
  - Issue permits for use of consumer-grade fireworks (similar to City of Zillah in Yakima County)
  - Ban use of all consumer fireworks (similar to Vancouver and other cities in Washington)