

MEMO

TO: Public Safety and Welfare Committee
FROM: Chief Tanya Reynen
DATE: July 13, 2026
RE: Fireworks Incident Data

Background

The Committee requested updated data on fireworks incidents and their impact on the Fire Department. This memo updates the department's memo of August 27, 2024 on the same subject.

Budget Goal

Maintains a safe and healthy community, with an eye toward future needs and trends.

Financial Impact

N/A

Recommendation

The Watertown Fire Department has no fireworks-related incidents to report for the past 24 months. During that period the department recorded no fireworks-caused fires, no fireworks-related injuries requiring an EMS response, and no fireworks-related property damage within the city that we were called to.

The Fire Marshal inspected all consumer fireworks sales tents operating in the city this season, as well as all permitted public fireworks displays, for compliance with applicable NFPA standards. The Fire Marshal was also on site during each public display. No violations or unsafe conditions requiring enforcement action were identified, and all displays were conducted without incident.

The department has also transitioned from NFIRS to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), the federal incident reporting standard. NERIS includes a cause classification specific to fireworks, which addresses the records coding limitation noted in the 2024 memo and allows more precise tracking going forward.

For statewide context, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services reports 126 emergency department visits for fireworks-related injuries in 2023, 137 in 2024, and 120 in 2025.

I have no fire or medical concerns or trends related to fireworks use to bring to the Committee at this time, and I am not recommending any change to department practice. The department will continue to monitor and will report any emerging trend.