



2024 ILLEGAL FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024



Tom Avila, Watsonville Fire Division Chief
Mish Radich, Watsonville Police Captain

4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS SALE

- City **ONLY** allows the temporary sale of Safe and Sane fireworks
- City profits from the sale of Fireworks (City receives permit fees, sales tax and a 7% surcharge from the sale of Safe and Sane products)
- City acts as regulatory agency to process the permitting of the booths
- Every year, about 20 non-profit agencies and youth groups utilize the proceeds of the sale of the fireworks as a fundraising strategy
- The sale and use of the Safe and Sane fireworks is authorized from July 1 to July 4



ILLEGAL FIREWORKS

- What concerns us is the use of **ILLEGAL** Fireworks on city streets leading up to, during and after the 4th of July
- Illegal fireworks are those that are airborne, loud, and explode
- Those are **ILLEGAL** and not allowed in the City limits
- Multiple calls and complaints originate from the indiscriminate use of Fireworks that cause stress, disturbance during evening hours, affecting animals, and many seniors and veterans
- **ILLEGAL** Fireworks are the reason why we need to have special enforcement



OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT & ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

- **Social Media Posts:** June 5, June 19, June 26 + July 2-July 4
- **Enforcement Teams:** Scheduled July 1st – July 4th
- **Drones** were used to assist with illegal fireworks enforcement **for the first time.**
- **During traditional enforcement, Officers developed information** on someone selling illegal fireworks in the City and followed-up on it, **leading to the largest seizure ever!**
- **Otherwise,** teams used unmarked Police vehicles to conduct enforcement, **which is still highly effective.**

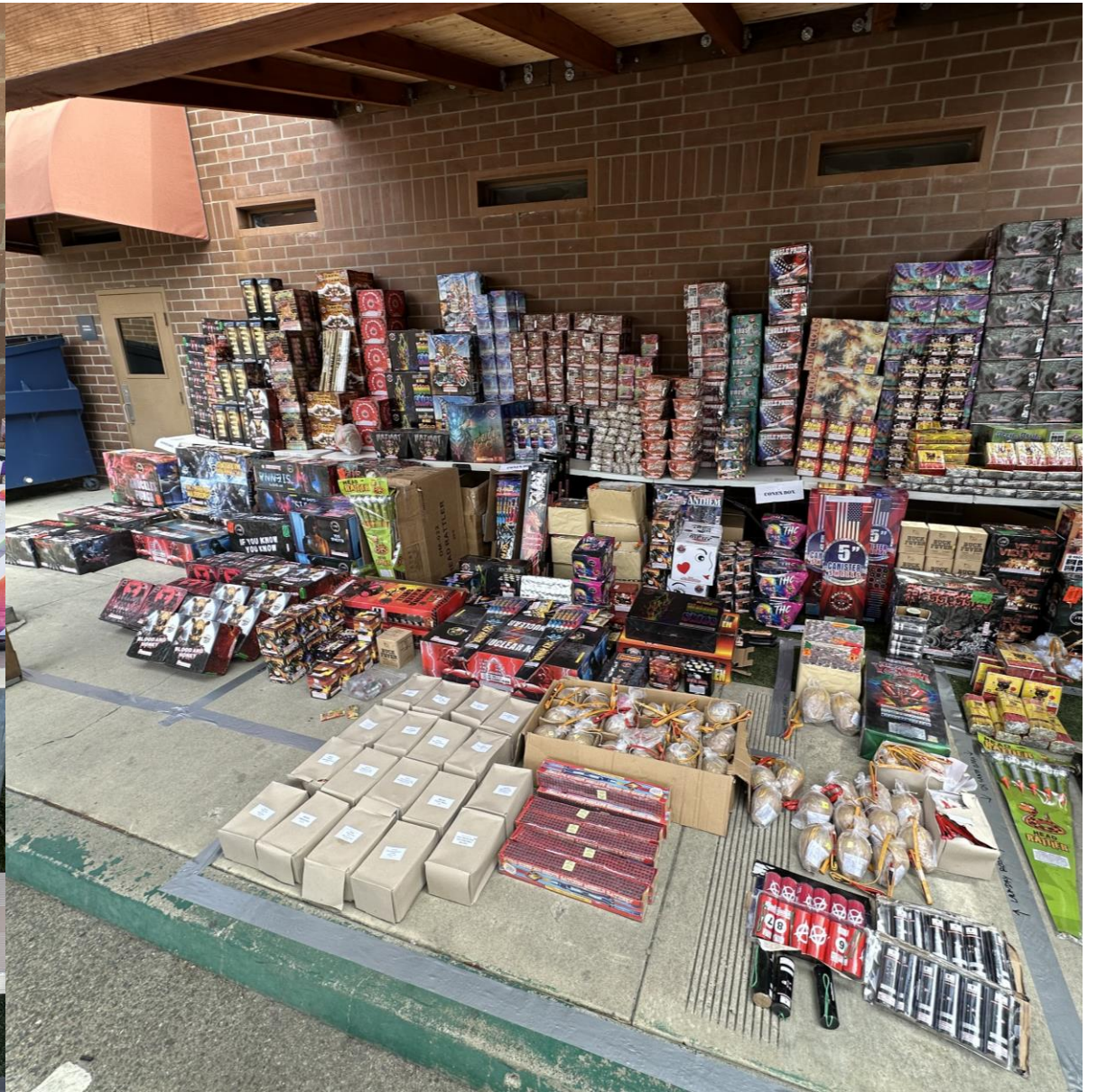




POLICE ENFORCEMENT T TOTALS

- **40 Citations Issued**
25 issued on July 4th
\$46,000 in fines
- **\$6,360** in fines collected by Finance, so far for 2024 Citations
- **4,512 lbs.** of illegal fireworks seized from the July 3rd Bust/Search Warrant Services
16000 block of Bonney Road, Royal Oaks
100 block of Santa Clara Street , Watsonville
- **185 lbs.** seized during regular enforcement efforts
- **4,697 lbs. TOTAL ILLEGAL FIREWORKS SEIZED IN 2024**
- **289 Calls for Service, July 1 – July 4**
81% of those calls (233) came in on July 4
During the same period in 2023, we had 135 fireworks calls
- **125.5 hours** of PD Overtime = \$12,309.86 in personnel







OPERATIONAL EFFORTS

July 1 – July 4

3 on-duty units + Battalion Chief performed fireworks patrol

Patrolled from sundown to 11:00 pm

On-duty personnel completed firework booth inspections on June 30

Overtime Cost

No direct overtime cost related to fireworks

Future Efforts

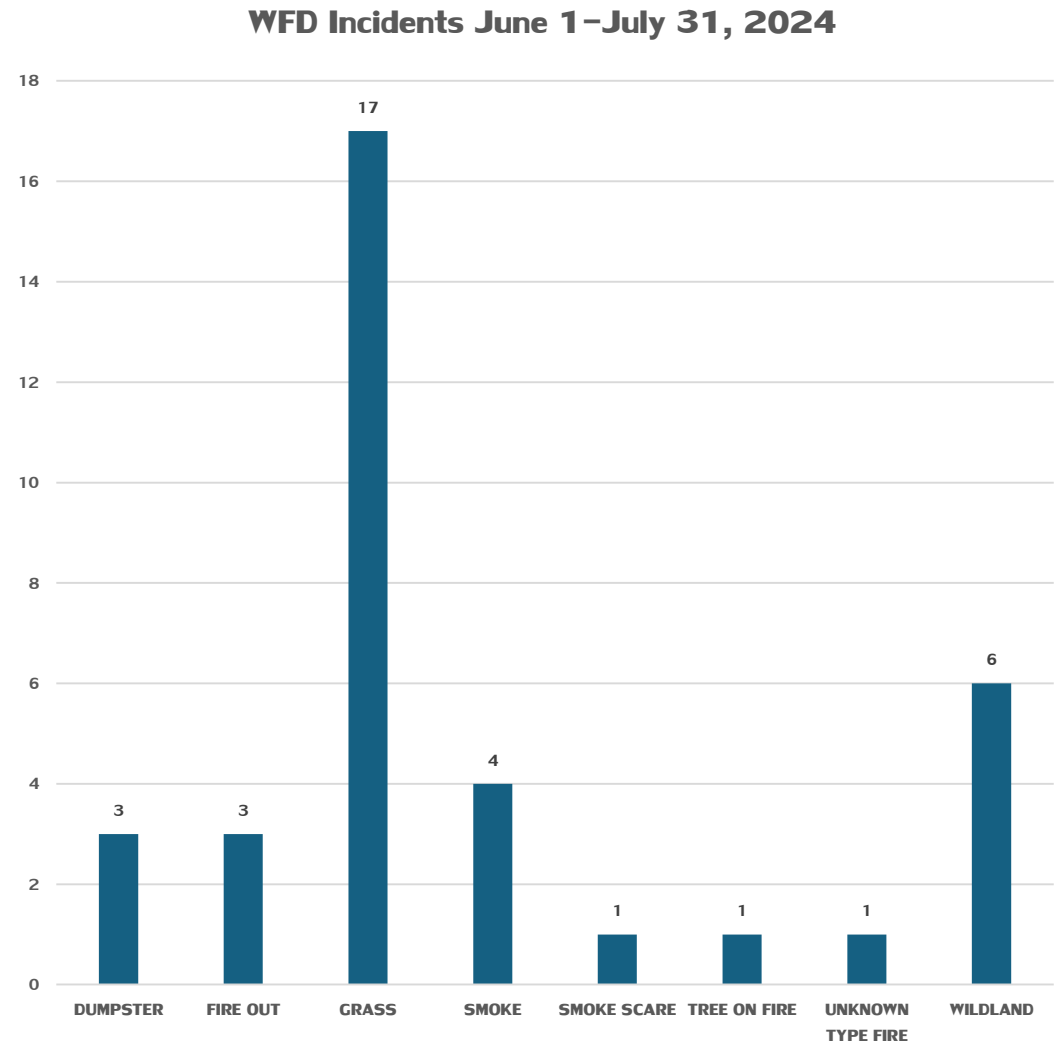
Improved fireworks data tracking in fire



WFD RESPONSE

36 incidents June 1–July 31, 2024

- 9 incidents identified fireworks or were attributed to fireworks
- 1 incident undetermined– charred fence
- 23 wildland/grass fire incidents



WFD RESPONSE TOTAL

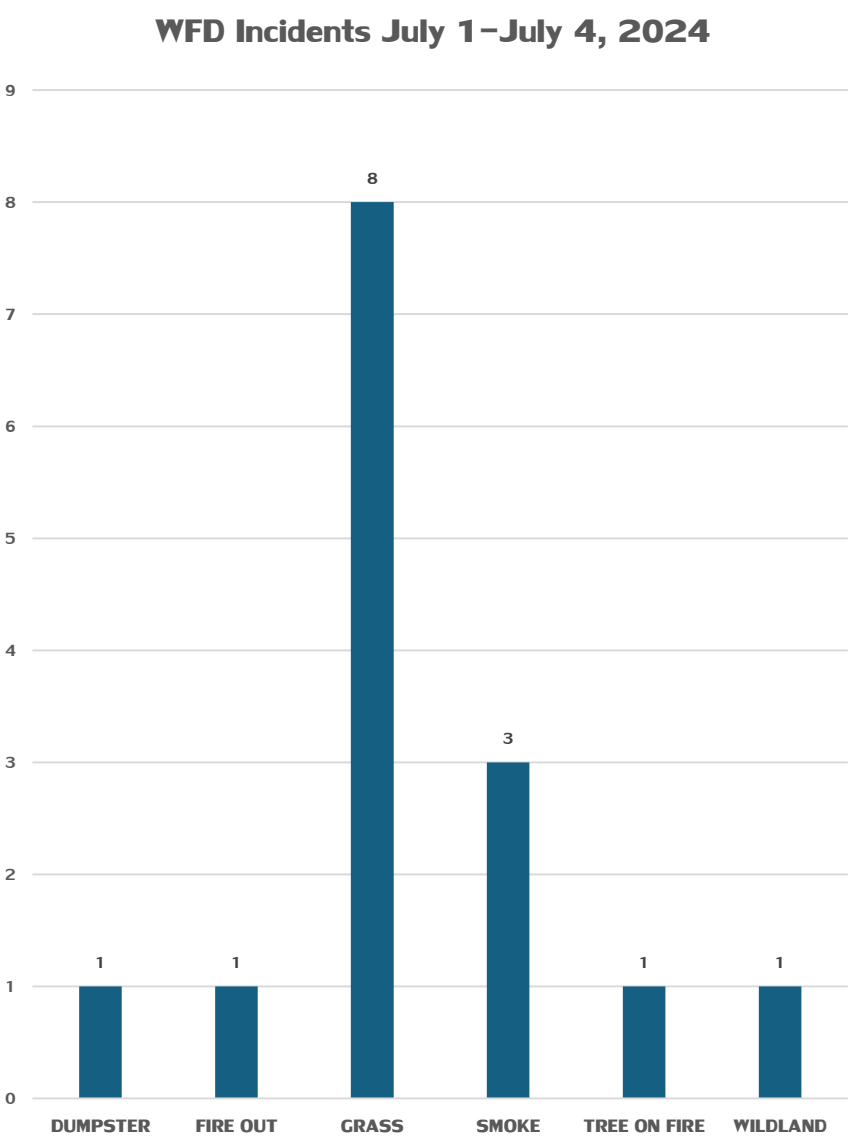
9 incidents that identify fireworks or were attributed to fireworks

- 4 wildland/ grass fires
- 1 tree on fire
- 2 smoke investigations
- 1 dumpster fire
- 1 pole-fire out

5 wildland/grass fire incidents

1 smoke investigation

15 incidents July 1-July 4, 2024





NEW IDEAS

- **Illegal Fireworks Task Force**
- **Illegal Fireworks Buy-Back Programs**
- **Community Reporting Portal**
- **Youth Education on Fireworks Safety**
- **Fines Collection Exploration**
- **Increased Fines**
- **City-Sponsored 4th of July Fireworks Event**
- **Prohibit ALL Fireworks?**
- **Utilize the Fire Department + Code Enforcement for increased enforcement efforts**

Buyback program takes illegal fireworks off the streets





QUESTIONS?