



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update on the Use of Illegal Fireworks in the City of Gilroy

Monday, July 12, 2021 (Gilroy, CA): Like other cities, the City of Gilroy has been faced with the increasing use of illegal fireworks and receives a dramatic increase in calls for service on the Fourth of July. Use of illegal fireworks continues to be a challenge for our City. In preparation for the holiday, City leadership consulted with criminal justice partners to discuss effective strategies to address the use of illegal fireworks. Based on these discussions, a multi-faceted approach for protecting the safety of our community was developed and deployed.

First, to detect the use of illegal fireworks and facilitate citations, the City deployed the “NailEm” app, which allowed users to report the location of illegal fireworks through the app in real-time. Additionally, an email account was developed and continues to be monitored for continued reporting of illegal fireworks. To aid in the detection of the location of illegal firework usage on the Fourth of July, the City deployed a drone that provided a birds-eye view of hotspots and neighborhoods that needed additional on-the-ground attention. To assist with the response on the ground, the City staffed two additional fire engines that actively monitored high fire-threat areas and bolstered the City’s ability to respond to calls for medical response. The City also doubled its’ police officer staffing during the evening hours to patrol the community and respond to calls for service. These efforts were funded by mitigation fees collected as part of legal safe and sane firework sales in Gilroy.

The City wishes to thank the residents of the City of Gilroy who, like last year, partnered with the City to prevent illegal fireworks by using the app and sending emails to report illegal fireworks usage. The City also wishes to thank those residents and visitors who followed the guidelines provided by the City regarding fireworks usage and helped to protect the safety of our community.

This year, the City saw an increase in calls for service related to illegal fireworks fielding 175 calls compared to 100 calls in 2020. Fortunately, the proactive multi-faceted approach to mitigating illegal fireworks usage allowed the City to respond sooner to calls for service related to illegal fireworks, and the City received fewer fire-related calls for service. The Gilroy Police Department has requested that the District Attorney’s Office charge eight people with the use of illegal fireworks.

To report illegal fireworks, the Gilroy Police Department asks the public to call the non-emergency line at (408) 846-0350 or email fireworks@cityofgilroy.org. In emergencies, please use 9-1-1.

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