

Fireworks in Clark County 2023



Clark County Council Work Session
June 26, 2024

April Furth - Director, Community Development

John Nohr - Fire Chief, Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue

Chris Drone - Division Chief, Fire Marshal, Fire District 3



Data Covered

- ❖ Estimated revenue, expenses and costs associated with the sale, use, and response to fireworks.
- ❖ Call volume (reporting/complaints).
- ❖ Fires associated with fireworks.
- ❖ Comparison to previous years.
- ❖ Enforcement.



Fireworks Code

- ❖ Firework sales are regulated by Clark County Code Title 5 Chapter 5.28
- ❖ Modifying County Code: Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 70 Chapter 70.77.250 (4)
 - ❖ Effective date no sooner than 1 year after adoption



Fireworks Legal Discharge Times
Rev 6.3.22

	June 28	June 29	June 30	July 1	July 2	July 3	July 4	July 5	Dec. 31
Unincorporated Clark County							9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
Amboy							9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
Battle Ground						9 am to 11 pm	9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
Camas							9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
La Center						9 am to 10pm	9 am to midnight		
Ridgefield							9 am to midnight		
Vancouver	It is illegal to use fireworks within Vancouver city limits.								
Washougal*							9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
Woodland				9 am to 11 pm	9 am to 11 pm	9 am to 11 pm	9 am to midnight		6 pm to 1 am
Yacolt		9 am to midnight	9 am to midnight	9 am to midnight	9 am to midnight	9 am to midnight	9 am to midnight	9 am to 11 pm	6 pm to 1 am

*Safe and Sane fireworks only.



Estimated revenue, expenses and costs associated with the sale, use, and response to fireworks 2023

❖ Clark County Fire Marshal Permit revenue:

Firework Stand Permits issued	Total permit fees collected	Total tent fees collected
40	\$4,000 (fee per capped at \$100)	\$5,772

❖ Tax Revenue:

- ❖ No data provided regarding tax revenue from the sale of fireworks in Clark County.
- ❖ Estimated gross sales reported by two firework suppliers in Clark County:
 - ❖ Supplier One: 2.37 million
 - ❖ Supplier Two: 2 million



Estimated revenue, expenses and costs associated with the sale, use, and response to fireworks continued

Total cost associated with response to fireworks:

- ❖ Clark County Fire Marshal wages associated with fireworks:

	Staff hours	Total wages
Firework sales lottery and other admin	40 hours	\$952
Permit Services	40 hours	\$1,087
Fire Marshal permit reviews	12 hours	\$625.92
Firework stand inspections	48 hours	\$2,055
Fire Investigations for structure fires involving fireworks	25 hours	\$1,513.68

- ❖ Fire Districts estimated expenses responding to fireworks related incidents:

- ❖ \$134,601.00 – sum total for all districts that reported.



Call Volume 2023

❖ Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency:

❖ Emergency call responses by CCSO:

❖ 48 calls responded to in Clark County between June 28th and July 4th

❖ Nuisance line:

❖ Noise complaints, illegal/after hours discharge of fireworks

❖ Between July 1st and July 5th

Calls from unincorporated Clark County	Total calls to line (including city limits)	Total forms filled out online (including city limits)
333	1,492*	117

*includes calls made outside of managed hours

❖ In addition, the FMO received 37 emails, 6 phone calls, and 3 voicemails related to 2023 fireworks.



Fires Associated with Fireworks 2023

- ❖ Structure fires related to fireworks in unincorporated Clark County:
 - ❖ Fires which happened in cities are not included in this information.
 - ❖ It's important to note that the cause listed here is the ignition source of the initial fire that then spread to a structure or belongings nearby.

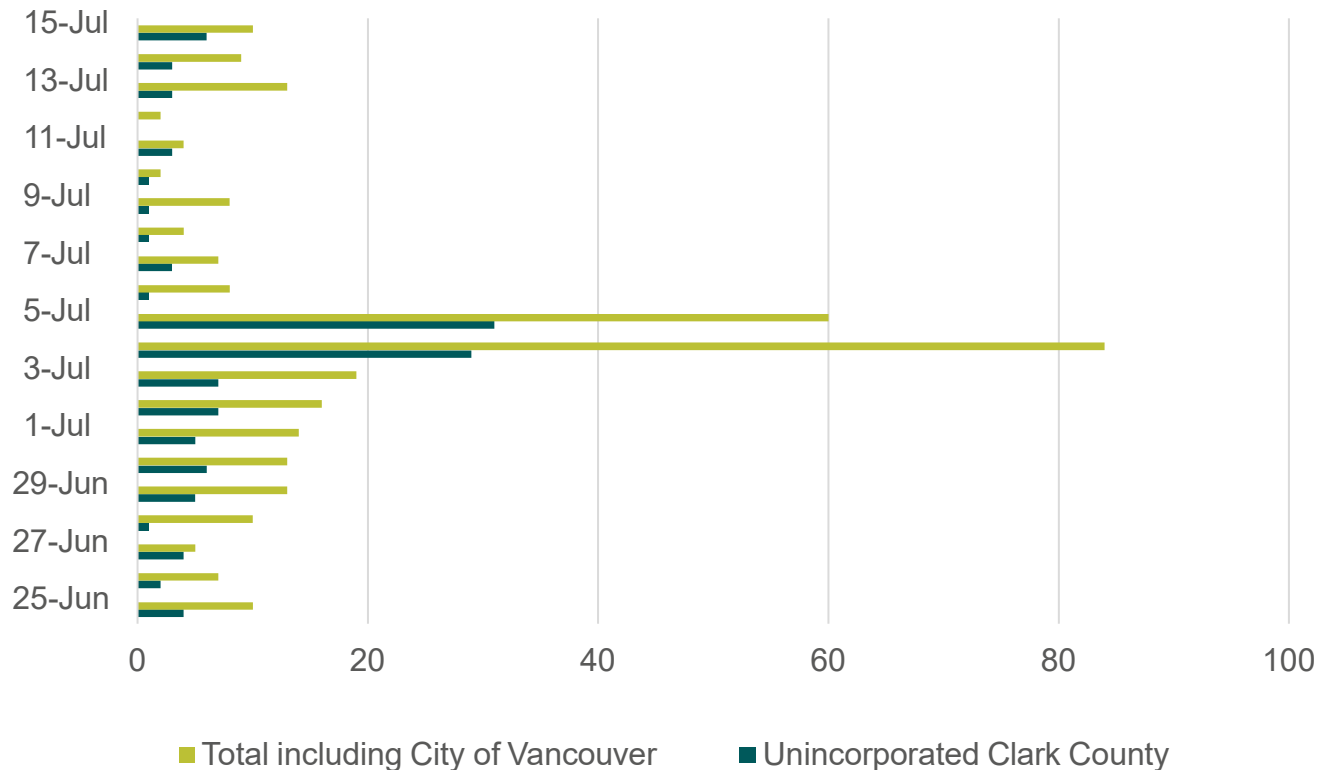
Structure type	Ignition source of initial fire	Estimated cost of damage
Single Family Residence	Firework into arborvitae	Structure - \$20,000
Single Family Residence	Firework into landscape vegetation	Structure and contents - \$350,000
Single Family Residence	Firework into arborvitae	Structure and contents - \$300,000
Single Family Residence	Improper disposal of firework debris	Structure and contents - \$90,000
Single Family Residence	Improper disposal of firework debris	Structure and contents - \$180,000
Single Family Residence	Probable firework ember into bark-dust	Structure - \$10,000
		Total Estimated Damage: \$950,000



Fires associated with fireworks continued 2023

- ❖ Vegetation fires with no structure damage:
 - ❖ The source of these fires are not typically investigated for cause due to the high volume. This includes all areas in CC, including within city limits.

Daily Vegetation Fires June 25 – July 15



June 28th – July 5th in Previous Years

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Vegetation Fires reported by Fire Districts	48	53	62	62	186
Clark County Fire Marshal firework related investigations	7	7	6	5	6



Enforcement

- ❖ Due to safety concerns of staff related to resources, the Clark County Fire Marshal's Office did not patrol for noise complaints and discharge outside of legal times this year.
- ❖ FMO Deputies still responded to calls if dispatched for fire investigation.



Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue Data



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



Consumer Grade Fireworks - continued

Washington RCW 70.77 and WAC 212-17 allows for consumer fireworks:

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



Legal Consumer Fireworks:



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:



Celebrate
Legally
Fireworks
Campaign

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.



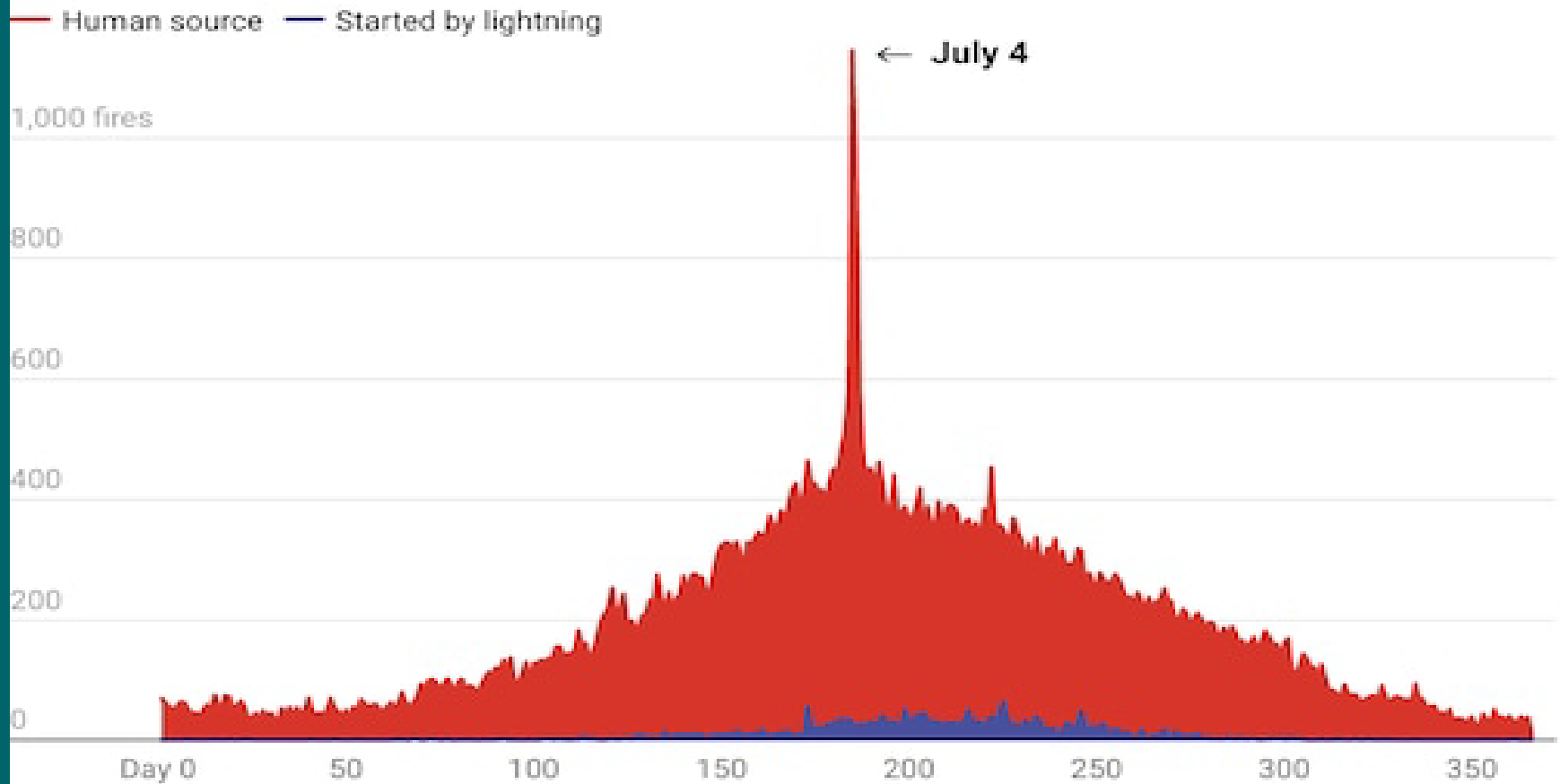
"Safe & Sane" Fireworks

- 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 western wildfires near homes spikes on July 4

People cause the vast majority of wildfires in the West's wildland-urban interface, where homes are near wildland areas. The chart shows the total fires each day of the year in these areas from 1992-2015. Fires from human sources spike on July 4, when people start setting off fireworks.



Day 0 = Jan. 1; July 4 = Day 185, or 186 during leap years

Chart: The Conversation/CC-BY-ND • Source: Mietkiewicz et al, 2020



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



Thank you!

Comments and questions

Clark County Community Development

1300 Franklin Street • PO Box 5000

Vancouver, WA 98666-5000

