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## PRESS RELEASE

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### MUSCATINE POLICE STEPPING UP CODE ENFORCEMENT

*Residents urged to practice fireworks safety and to follow City Code ... or be fined*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The booms, the snaps, the crackles, and the pops are being heard throughout the community as the celebration of Independence Day approaches, and residents are reminded that the discharging of consumer fireworks at this time is illegal.

While legal vendors are dealing with the shortage of consumer fireworks this year due to the pandemic, homes of area residents will still witness the discharging of fireworks including the use of sparklers, firecrackers, and other large displays.

Citizens are urged to be responsible regarding the use of fireworks and to remain within the guidelines established in the Muscatine City Code that limits the legal discharge of consumer fireworks to just two days for the Independence Day holiday. Muscatine City Code states that consumer fireworks can be legally discharged **July 3 and July 4 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. only.**

#### **No More Warnings ...**

The Muscatine Police will be taking an aggressive approach to violations of the City fireworks ordinance.

“Over the last couple of years we gave numerous warnings to people that violated the City ordinance,” Brett Talkington, Muscatine Police Chief, said. “We found that this was not very productive with all the complaints that we were receiving. So, moving forward, the Police Department will be issuing citations to people lighting fireworks outside of the legal times.”

That includes citing homeowners when someone on their property is discharging fireworks outside of the legal time frame.

“We want people to be respectful when lighting fireworks, and to make sure you are only lighting them off within the time frame allowed by City ordinance,” Talkington said. “If we all work together and follow the rules we can all have an enjoyable Fourth of July.”

### **Safety is foremost concern ...**

Public safety is also the foremost concern for local and state officials in the governance of the sale and use of consumer fireworks.









“The best way to stay safe is to let the professionals handle the fireworks by attending a public display,” Jerry Ewers, Muscatine Fire Chief, said. “But if you choose to discharge consumer fireworks, please do it safely and responsibly only during the hours of 9 a.m. through 10 p.m. on July 3rd and 4th only.”

Local government and public safety officials share deep concern for the individuals who discharge the fireworks, those individuals who are in the vicinity when fireworks are discharged, those who may be affected by the noise created by the explosions, and for the homes, businesses, or other structures that may be ignited by fireworks.

And for household pets. (Check out the July 4 safety tips from the American Veterinary Medical Association by clicking [HERE](#)).



### **Highlights from the City Code ...**

-  Current Muscatine City Code sets the time for the legal discharge of consumer fireworks during the Independence Day holiday between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. on July 3 and July 4 on real property that they own or on property where consent has been given by the property owner.
-  Persons 17 years or younger are not permitted to discharge fireworks except under the supervision of an adult who is within sight and sound of the minor(s) as they discharge fireworks.
-  It is a violation of City Code for any parent, guardian, or other adult having custody of a minor to allow the minor to discharge fireworks without direct supervision by the parent, guardian, or other adult having custody.
-  Any person discharging a fireworks device or any person permitting the discharge of a fireworks device on their property assumes the responsibility for and the potential consequences from the discharging of fireworks.
-  It is a violation of City Code to discharge fireworks in a reckless manner or a manner that is likely to cause death, injury, fire, or property damage, and to discharge fireworks while showing visible signs of, or determined to be, intoxicated or under the influence of a drug or narcotic.
-  It is against City Code to alter, remove, or discharge components of a fireworks device from its intended method of discharging.
-  Snakes, sparklers, or caps can be discharged in a public place unless specifically prohibited by the owner of the public space, and as long as all trash, wrappers, and wires are properly disposed of.
-  Sky lantern open flame devices are not permitted unless the device is tethered by a retrievable rope that provides the individual control over the sky lantern.

Using fireworks outside the designated dates and times listed below is considered to be a violation and can result in fines of no less than \$250 per violation. Anyone discharging fireworks or allowing the discharge of fireworks on their property assumes responsibility for that discharge and the consequences, if warranted.

### **Fireworks injuries ...**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) indicated in their latest Annual Fireworks Report that an estimated 10,000 fireworks injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms during calendar year 2019 with 73 percent treated in the one month period from June 21, 2019, to July 21, 2019. Children under the age of 15 accounted for 36 percent of the estimated firework-related injuries.

The parts of the body most often injured were hands and fingers (an estimated 30 percent); legs (an estimated 23 percent); eyes (an estimated 15 percent); head, face, and ears (an estimated 15 percent); and arms (an estimated 10 percent). Burns accounted for 58 percent of the emergency department-treated injuries mostly to the hands, fingers, arms, and legs.

The CPSC offers these recommendations:

- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks. Sparklers, a firework often considered by many to be the ideal “safe” device for the young, burn at very high temperatures and should not be handled by young children. Children may not understand the danger involved with fireworks and may not act appropriately while using the devices.
- Persons under the age of 18 shall not discharge any fireworks without adult supervision.
- Do not allow any running or horseplay in or around the fireworks firing area or with fireworks.
- Set off fireworks outdoors in a clear area, away from houses, dry leaves, or grass and other flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that fail to ignite or explode.
- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them with water and throw them away.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never light fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.

- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Check instructions for special storage directions.
- Observe local laws.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.

**Report any fires in buildings, vehicles, or greenspaces by calling 911 immediately!**

**Enjoy a safe holiday season.**

More information can be found on the City of Muscatine [Firework Safety](#) page.