



Celebrate Safe
Illegal Fireworks Enforcement
Pilot Campaign
2018 Report





Pilot Campaign Objectives

- **Public Outreach**
 - Banners, Posters, Yard Signs, Stickers, Utility Bill Insert, Radio Interviews, Radio Ads, Social Media Campaign, Press Conference, Public Services Announcements Video.
- **Safe Surrender Day/ Seizure of Illegal Fireworks**
 - Provide the public the opportunity to dispose of fireworks, both legal and illegal fireworks without fear of prosecution.



Pilot Campaign Objectives

- **Tip lines-**
 - Provided multiple methods to report illegal fireworks instead of the 9-1-1 system.
 - Celebrate Safe hotline, Merced Connect App and dedicated email address.
 - Expanded dispatch center on July 3 and 4th staffed with City volunteers.
- **Enforcement**
 - Merced City Fire and Police conducted surveillance of social media for the illegal sale and distribution of illegal fireworks.
 - Increased patrol enforcement and Fire Department personnel on July 3rd and 4th.

Enforcement before the 4th

Arrested five (5) people in three (3) cases for the sale of illegal fireworks

In total, approx. 650 pounds of illegal fireworks were taken off the streets.



Safe Surrender Day

- Held on Saturday June 30, 2018 at Fire Station 51 from 9:00-1:00
- Allowed the public to dispose of any fireworks (safe and sane or illegal) safely and without any fear of prosecution.
- Two individuals surrendered illegal fireworks and when doing so they thanked us for our efforts to address illegal fireworks.
- Two couples stopped by the station just to say thank you for the Celebrate Safe program. They expressed gratitude that the City was addressing the issues associated with illegal fireworks.





Requests for Service at Celebrate Safe Hotline

	July 3, 2018	July 4, 2018
Celebrate Safe hotline (388-SAFE)	38	302
Merced Connect	34	76
Email	9	11



Requests for Service at Dispatch Center

	2017 (July 3 rd and 4 th)	2018 (July 3 rd and 4 th)	Percent Increase/Decrease
911 Calls	483	485	.5% Increase
Abandoned Calls	21	27	28% increase



Celebrate Safe Hotline Results

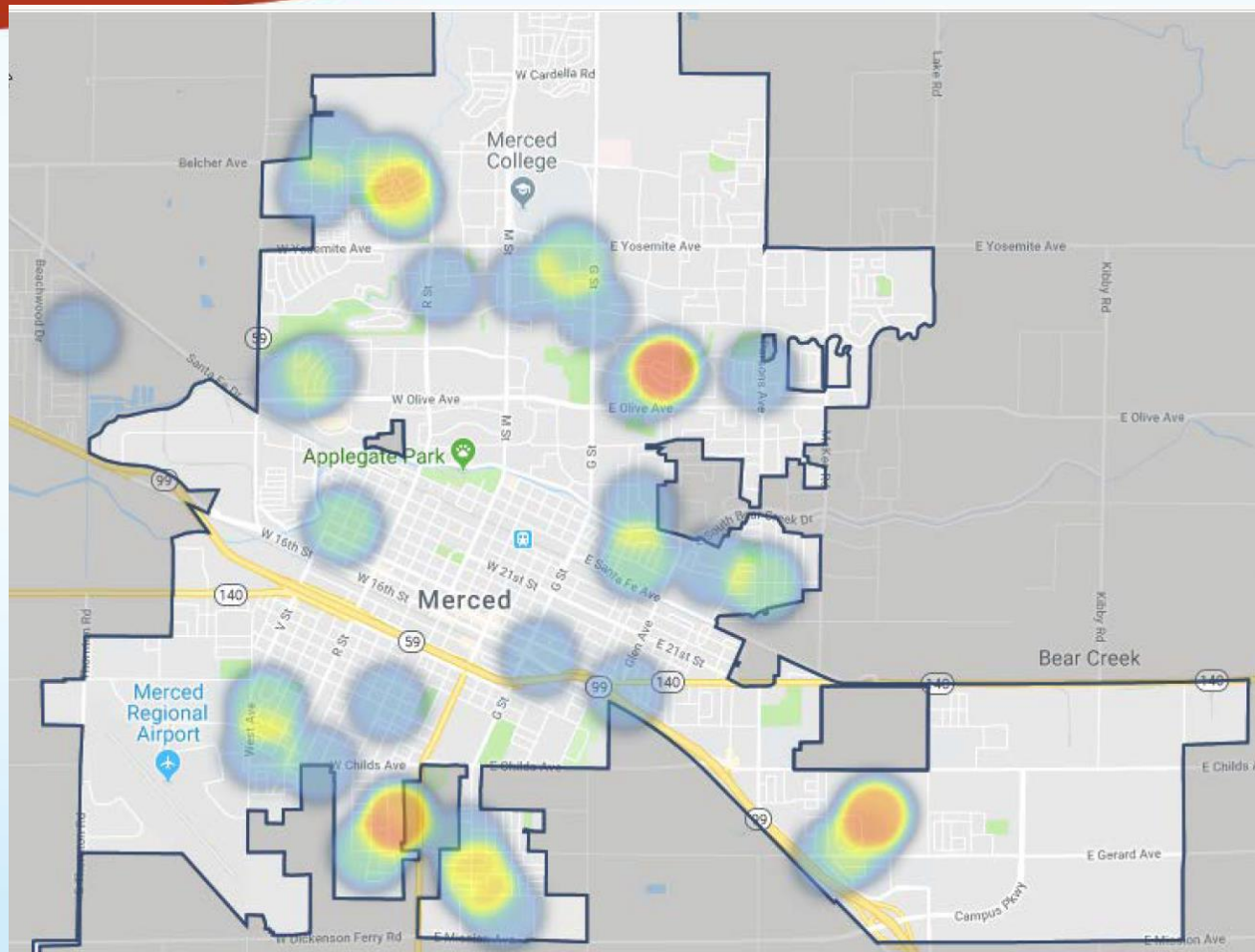
- **The Celebrate Safe hotline answered 340 calls. Without the hotline, the calls would have been made directly into our dispatch center on 9-1-1 lines or other emergency/business numbers.**
- **More than 20 calls to the hotline were reporting incidents in Planada, Delhi, Atwater and in the County of Merced.**
- **These stats shows community buy-in for the program and that the public outreach campaign was effective.**



Celebrate Safe Hotline results

- **Six calls into the hotline were directly transferred to Dispatch as the caller was reporting a non-firework emergency.**
- **Negative- callers often reported fireworks being discharged in vicinities (i.e., near Burbank school) and not a specific address. Also, many callers refused to provide their name or call back numbers.**
- **Next year we will need more volunteers to staff the hotline on July 4th.**

Heat Maps of Illegal Fireworks Reports



- **Information technology produced maps of the City showing the areas highest call (Complaint) volume.**
- **This assisted with enforcement.**
- **Provides good data for subsequent year's efforts.**

Reporting Period: June 28 through July 6th 2017 Compared to 2018

Incident Type	2017	2018	Percentage increase/decrease
Fire	27	20	26% Decrease
EMS	124	153	23% Increase
Hazardous Condition	4	3	25% Decrease
Service Call	10	14	40% Increase
Good Intent	33	35	6% Increase
False Alarm	10	11	10% Increase
Total Incidents	218	240	10% Increase
Estimated Dollar Loss	\$86,000	\$146,000	70% Increase



Fire Cause

- **7 fire incidents occurred on July 4th.**
- **All were arson caused and fireworks related.**
- **One was a residential fire.**
- **Six were vegetation fires.**



Enforcement on July 3rd and 4th

- **Staffing on July 3rd**
 - Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Fire Chiefs, 1 Fire Investigator, and 1 resource officer.
 - Police Chief, 1 Lieutenant, 1 Dispatch supervisor, 2 dispatchers, 2 call takers, 1 sergeant, and 5 officers.
- **Staffing on July 4th**
 - Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Fire Chiefs, 2 Fire Investigator, and 1 resource officer, 1 Engine Company (three personnel)
 - 1 Sergeant , 3 officers, 2 dispatchers, 1 call taker.
- **Citations**
 - The Fire and Police Department personnel issued twelve administrative citations and confiscated illegal fireworks.

Community Feedback

City of Merced Fire Department
@MercedFire

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Oldest ▾

- Karen Eldridge** Awesome.
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- Suzanne Miles** Thanks to all of you! Last night was the quietest July 3rd in years. I appreciate your efforts, and so does my dog!
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- Lisa Wiseman** Thank you!
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- Maria Santo** Thank you
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- WendynErnie Walk** Thank you, we also noticed it was the quietest July 3 in quite a while. We had some activity earlier this evening in the Chenoweth School area, however! Will be keeping the phone and Merced Connect app nearby! Be safe everybody!
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- Tina Quinn** Thank You! Quietest 4th of July week I can ever remember!
Like · Reply · Message · 3w
- Mary Gonella Wentz** Thank you all!
Like · Reply · Message · 3w

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Oldest ▾

- Harry Markarian** Should be banned
Like · Reply · Message · 5w
- Kerri Clinton** WAY to long! That's 8 days of terrified dogs!
Like · Reply · Message · 5w · Edited
- Teia Varner-Duggan** Wtf...
Like · Reply · Message · 5w
- Bill Tripp** Yeah I agree, should only be allowed on July 4 and that's it there's no reason to be firing them off before or after.
Like · Reply · Message · 5w
- Rhonda Lis** 8 days!!! We stay home on the 4th to keep our animals safe and sane, Now you want to give them 8 days of hell. It will be worse than before because now these people have the go ahead for 8 days. SMH.
Like · Reply · Message · 5w
- Jamie Lenore Pangelina** 8 days?! That is way too long. Who makes these decisions and why isn't the community involved?!

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Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 3

Linda Gail Burdick SMH... this will be "interesting", geeze, did anyone drive around and see all the dead lawns around town cuz of all the LAZY residents who stopped watering their yards, even tho the drought is almost over, and the City allows three watering days again? Eight days is too long, fireworks are for the Fourth, and people should go watch them at legal events setting them off, not out in their dead front yards! Praying for our firefighters... #stillhatefireworks #secureyourpets #puttagswithyournumberonthem

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · Edited · 5

11 Replies

Amanda Rose Why not allowed on the 4th only? I mean it's ridiculous for people to light them off before and after, they're meant for the 4th. Bunch of scared animals and babies because people are so dang inconsiderate about anyone other than themselves.

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 6

Sandy Machado Fireworks should ONLY be used from July 3rd to the 4th and shouldn't even go up for sale until the 3rd. Idgaf what anyone says. I love the fun and thrill of fireworks don't get me wrong, but you get idiots blasting them off all damn day and night eve... See More


Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 7

Rhonda Cook Ellison Should be banned and that's the stupidest thing ever. What Idiot came up with that idea.

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 1

Erica Southwick What! This is not okay. So not only can they be purchased earlier now they can be used longer (earlier)! 🤔

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 3



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Mary Hayes more people firing guns 🙄👍🙄 2

Like · Reply · Message · 5w

Janeen Cozart Not cool at all. Should be 1 night only. On sale July 2..3rd..4th. That's it. It's gotten way out of control on ppl using them for the whole month.. or they buy up as much as can and set them of year round.

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 2

George Salbert Jared McClanahan opinions of the townspeople

Like · Reply · Message · 5w

Jaime Ortega I hope you guys are safe that night. Know that the people blowing up the big stuff are already testing them out tonight... who do we call to report them?

Like · Reply · Message · 5w

2 Replies

Vickie Mounts Safe and sane fireworks can start fires just as easily as illegal ones.

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · 1

Po'g Mahon 9 DAYS??? 9 days and nights of fireworks. What the Heck...is this Beirut now? Too long! July 3rd, 4th, 5th is plenty of time and it should be limited to party-poppers ONLY. The real fireworks on the 4th should be viewed at the fairgrounds.

Like · Reply · Message · 5w · Edited · 1



Lessons Learned

- **Enforcement of the sale and use of illegal fireworks should increase next year to reduce the use of Illegal Fireworks.**
- **Additional police officers and fire investigators should be scheduled to work the special detail, especially on July 4th.**
- **Expanded dispatch greatly reduced the number of calls into the 9-1-1 center.**



Lessons Learned from Pilot

- **The addition of the engine company assisted in handling the emergency incidents on the peak of the 4th of July.**
- **The addition of a resource officer in the dispatch center helped make maximum use of limited Fire Department resources.**
- **A code approved storage unit should be obtained for the safe storage of illegal fireworks and combustible and flammable materials/liquids.**



Lessons Learned from Pilot

- **The tip line, Merced Connect, and email assisted the public in reporting the sale and use of illegal fireworks.**
- **Reluctant reporters – the public did not want to provide contact information.**
- **Future public relations campaigns should stress the need for cooperation by residents.**



Lessons Learned from Pilot

- **Consider ways to effectuate a community culture change regarding the use of illegal fireworks.**
- **Learn from other entities. Review their debriefings and enforcement efforts. For example, Sacramento has a Fireworks Mitigation Task Force that includes two ATF agents.**
- **Host an illegal fireworks forum in early 2019.**
- **Consider organizing a public pyrotechnic show to help reduce the number of illegal fireworks being used in the City.**



Celebrate Safe 2019

