



SANDY CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

BRUCE CLINE
FIRE CHIEF

MONICA ZOLTANSKI
MAYOR

CLIFFORD STRACHAN
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Memo

To: Sandy City Council
From: Battalion Chief Robert DeKorver
CC: Fire Chief Bruce Cline
Date: March 30, 2022
Re: 2021/2022 Firework Restriction Survey

Good evening, Sandy City Council Members. I was asked by Fire Chief Bruce Cline to provide you with a synopsis of the firework survey that was recently completed as well as the laws, maps, and any future legislation.

From November 3, 2021 to November 17, 2021, Sandy City through the communications department issued a survey concerning the restriction of fireworks. The city used the Citizen Connect Panel, social media, the website, and the city newsletter to get the survey out. The last time that we completed this survey was in 2018, which gave us good information and data to make some changes to the firework restriction map and to better understand the wants of our citizens. The following bullet points are some of the highlights of the 2021/2022 survey.

- The survey consisted of 12 questions.
- There was a total of 1,640 responses to the survey.
- 97 percent of the respondents were residents of Sandy City, while 3 percent of respondents were either employees who work in the city, a resident of unincorporated Salt Lake County or other.
- 60 percent of respondents currently live within a firework restricted area. This is up from 2018 when the numbers were just 56 percent. This could really be due to the expansion of the firework restricted area over the years.
- 62 percent of respondents prefer to enjoy their fireworks at public events, which is a high number. Only 19 percent discharge fireworks on their own property and only 10 percent do not enjoy fireworks in any setting.
- In 2018 the top two reasons that respondents disliked fireworks were Others using fireworks illegally and the chance of fire. Those have just flipped and in this survey Chance of fire was number 1 while others using fireworks illegally was number 2. Following close though was the other things that we always hear such as scaring animals, smoke and air quality, noise and debris left behind on neighboring properties. 3 percent stated that they like fireworks, so they had no



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reason to mark anything that they disliked.

- 72 percent of the respondents believe that some fireworks are legal, and some are illegal for private use. It seems that are education is getting out about legal versus illegal fireworks.
- 57 percent of respondents felt that more areas of Sandy should be restricted compared to 15 percent that would like to see less areas of Sandy City restricted. In 2018 we had 70 percent of respondents felt that there should be more restrictions in place.
- In years with a drought 95 percent of the respondents would like to see additional firework restrictions.
- 93 percent of those that took the survey did use personal fireworks this last year.
- The top three areas for where the respondents found firework laws was the Sandy City website, posted signs, local news. In 2018 those numbers were just slightly different with the website still being number 1, but the news and Sandy newsletter were number 2 and 3.
- 67 percent of respondents felt that the fire department did enough firework education this last year. However, there were 33 percent that felt like we could have done more.
- 88 percent of respondents also feel like the local government should be able to have the ability to ban fireworks city-wide if needed. This is a very high percentage and indicative of the feelings of the citizens concerning fireworks.
- There were an additional 33 pages of additional comments, that really drove home the point that citizens would like to see more restrictions put into place as well as having more local control with firework restrictions.

Currently as can be seen from the attached current map we have restricted everything east of 1300 East. We have also restricted within 200 feet of waterways, and trails. The law is very specific with what we can do as fire officials, when presenting an ordinance before the city. As you may recall, we can restrict areas where there is a history of fire, where the Wildland Urban Interface has been adopted in our city as well as within 200 feet of all trailways, and waterways and vacant laws. Currently the law does not allow for us to restrict due to animals, PTSD, and we are unable to restrict the sales of fireworks within the restricted area.

As a reminder our department responded on 112 firework calls, which has increased. We were able to find that these calls mixed about 50/50 whether they were in restricted areas or in non-restricted areas. I have included the map that I showed you from our update back in August of 2021, so you can see where the calls took place. As I stated in the update, I think that we as a fire department can do a better job with our education as to what is legal and what is not legal, because a lot of our calls were in non-restricted areas that potentially could have taken away from other responses.

So, the next question is where we go from here. As I have said many times in the past, I believe that we have a very good ordinance concerning firework restrictions within Sandy. In looking at the data we are going on the calls and doing more code enforcement and have not had many fires since these restrictions have been put into place. I do think that we need to provide more education and look at placing more



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permanent signs in our restricted areas, something like what Draper has done. This may mean a change in our sign ordinances, but something that we are currently working on.

What we saw in the legislature this year is that there were no changes to the firework laws. With the lack of changes to the law, we will continue to be limited on what we can do. As many of you know there were cities that did restrict their entire cities last year, but my interpretation and the interpretation of other Fire Marshals including the Utah State Fire Marshal is that this is not something that we can legally do.

I know that this is a lot of information, but it is pertinent information, because now we are looking to you as council members to provide us with your direction, so that we can have our final maps and ordinances in place by the May 1st deadline that is part of the law. If you have any other questions, I would be happy to answer them, and thank you.