

2025-2026



COUNTY *of* VENTURA

Civil Grand Jury

**Countywide Response
to Public Complaints
About Fireworks**

June 25, 2026

Countywide Response to Public Complaints About Fireworks

SUMMARY

The public’s discharge of fireworks in Ventura County — legal and illegal — impacts the quality of life for residents, and impacts law enforcement and fire departments both financially and from a staffing standpoint. These explosions have other impacts, such as negative effects on individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), fire danger, noise disturbance to citizens, and trauma to pets.

In response to a public complaint to the Ventura County Civil Grand Jury, an investigation identified concerns regarding record-keeping of calls from residents about illegal fireworks, as well as different responses by law enforcement agencies to public complaints, and varied degrees of implementing technology that would assist in responding to those complaints.

Additionally, the Civil Grand Jury investigation found inconsistency among cities regarding the legality of possession and legally discharging so-called “safe and sane” fireworks. Those fireworks are purchased legally in Fillmore and transported to areas of the county where possession and discharge are illegal.

The Civil Grand Jury recommends enhanced coordination and cooperation among law enforcement agencies and city fire departments, as well as engagement with state agencies, departments, or committees to determine best practices for enforcement and public compliance with laws and regulations regarding the sale and use of fireworks. It also recommends that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors pass a Host Liability Ordinance incorporating fireworks, applicable to the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. Lastly, the Civil Grand Jury recommends that each city that lacks a fireworks host liability ordinance (Ojai, Moorpark, Camarillo, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks) develop one.

BACKGROUND

Fireworks are generally categorized in two ways, as “dangerous” or “safe and sane.” “Dangerous” fireworks, as defined by California law, include skyrockets and rockets, Roman candles, firecrackers, “chasers” that travel along the ground, and various chemical compounds.

METHODOLOGY

The Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with leaders of the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office (VCSO), city police agencies in the county, the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD), Ventura County Animal Services (VCAS), and the Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) regarding the nature of public complaints about fireworks, how those agencies respond to the complaints, and the direct and indirect impact the discharge of fireworks has on residents of Ventura County.

Additionally, the Civil Grand Jury conducted research on governmental agencies, made several site visits, surveyed social media, and reviewed other California civil grand jury reports and news reports.


(Ref-002) California Health and Safety Code 12505 prohibits discharge of “dangerous” fireworks by the public in all areas of California. (Ref-002) However, California allows the public to discharge “safe and sane” fireworks. “Safe and sane” fireworks are defined as “any fireworks that have been approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and that have been carefully examined and tested by the State Fire Marshal and determined by the State Fire Marshal that the fireworks meet and are in compliance with the general and specific standards for design, construction, performance, and labeling for ‘safe and sane’ fireworks, as set forth in Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 979) of Division 1 of Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations, as it reads on July 1, 2023.” (Ref-003)

Types of Fireworks

“Safe and sane” 12529 H&S

“Dangerous” fireworks: 12505 H&S

- “Explode, skip, fly, travel, or dart”*













 Sky Rockets	 Bottle Rockets	 Roman Candles	 Mortars	 M-100	 M-80
 Cherry Bombs	 Palomitas	 Firecrackers	 Helicopters		

Figure 1: Types of Fireworks. Source: CA State Fire Marshal (Att-008a)

Throughout California, the illegal possession and discharge of fireworks remain a challenge. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CAL FIRE’s) Office of the State Fire Marshal, “... illegal activity remains prolific and increasingly blatant.” (Ref-004) CAL FIRE is establishing a Public Safety Fireworks Enforcement Task Force, composed exclusively of fire service and law enforcement members (with no fireworks industry participation) to review current state laws and regulations and develop recommendations to enhance enforcement and compliance. The task force plans to issue a formal report in 2026. (Ref-004)

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Locally, the possession and discharge of any fireworks is illegal in all of Ventura County. (Ref-005) Four cities have passed restrictions on possession and use of fireworks (Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Fillmore). ([Ref-005c](#), [Ref-005d](#), [Ref-005e](#), [Ref-005f](#), [Ref-007](#)) In addition, the remaining six cities and the unincorporated areas of Ventura County are under the jurisdiction of the Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD), which has enacted Section 5601 of Ordinance 34 prohibiting possession and use of fireworks. ([Ref-005a](#), [Ref-005b](#)), Individual jurisdictions can pass ordinances that override the county ordinance. ([Ref-006](#)) Within Ventura County, only the City of Fillmore has passed an ordinance that allows the sale and discharge of “safe and sane” fireworks during specific dates. ([Ref-007](#))

Within Ventura County, public and law enforcement attitudes regarding fireworks vary. Interviews with leaders in several law enforcement agencies indicate that there are differing perceptions about the seriousness of the fireworks situation. ([Ref-001](#)) This has led to differing commitments by law enforcement in addressing and responding to public fireworks complaints. ([Ref-001](#)) Each municipality passes its own ordinances and sets financial penalties regarding fireworks, including policies and priorities to enforce the ordinances. There is no uniformity within the county. ([Ref-001](#))

All 10 cities and the unincorporated areas of Ventura County experience discharge of fireworks, primarily around the Fourth of July. The county’s law enforcement agencies receive hundreds of calls from the public during “fireworks season” (which requires the assignment of personnel to respond to the calls for service). Each city defines “fireworks season” slightly differently, but all include several days before the Fourth of July through July 5. ([Ref-001](#))

Ventura County law enforcement agencies report that the fireworks are a combination of “safe and sane” fireworks obtained legally in Fillmore and locations outside Ventura County but illegally discharged in Ventura County (outside of Fillmore), plus “dangerous” fireworks illegally obtained within and outside Ventura County. ([Ref-001](#))

Law enforcement agencies throughout Ventura County report similar impacts on their communities from the discharge of fireworks, such as trauma to pets, negative effects on individuals suffering from PTSD, fire danger, and noise disturbance to citizens, even during late-night and early-morning hours. ([Ref-001](#))

Ventura County’s law enforcement agencies and fire departments, animal services, and veterans service agencies all report, to varying degrees, financial or emotional impacts and acknowledge there is a significant emotional and mental health fallout from fireworks. ([Ref-001](#))

Due to the development and adaptation of drone technology, some police departments throughout California are investigating, or have implemented, the use of drones to assist in detecting specific locations where fireworks are being discharged. They have used public messaging to announce that drones will be deployed in advance as a deterrent to those inclined to discharge fireworks. ([Ref-008](#), [Ref-009](#)) Ventura County law enforcement agencies are at different stages of investigating and implementing this technology. ([Ref-001](#))

DISCUSSION

The Civil Grand Jury's interviews with law enforcement officials in Ventura County reflected their understanding of the public's attitudes toward fireworks and revealed their current efforts at responding to complaints about fireworks discharge.

Justification for the public's discharge of fireworks around the Fourth of July dates at least to President John Adams, who in 1776 wrote, "It [Independence Day] ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews (sic), Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more." (Ref-010)

TRADITIONAL REALITY OF FIREWORKS

- Extensive, ongoing, and widespread
- Disturbs personal peace and wellbeing
- Effects on people
- Effects on pets and animals
- Fire risk
- Injury / fatality risk



Figure 2: Reality of Fireworks. Source: Oxnard Police Department, April 2026. (Att-008b)

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Impacts on Ventura County

Law Enforcement: The volume of complaints to law enforcement agencies regarding fireworks is reflected in the following table:

Jurisdiction	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
VCSO	2023	15	10	3	19	25	150	353	40	27	9	25	37	713
	2024	26	4	6	14	26	177	355	42	34	51	25	55	815
	2025	24	10	17	26	14	166	328	42	18	20	49	26	740
Oxnard	2023	29	5	3	14	34	275	579	25	29	30	17	35	1,075
	2024	28	5	7	7	57	415	670	40	37	31	20	95	1,412
	2025	52	14	10	13	65	213	585	36	23	32	57	74	1,174
Ventura	2023	13	6	3	3	19	77	412	28	11	14	5	26	617
	2024	15	2	4	8	100	211	455	25	27	38	19	31	935
	2025	33	5	28	4	22	74	362	47	14	20	16	25	650
Port Hueneme	2023	9	1	1	8	11	62	118	6	8	1	4	4	233
	2024	7	0	0	2	18	81	113	7	7	5	2	9	251
	2025	5	1	2	4	10	53	111	3	7	3	10	10	219
Santa Paula**	2023													
	2024													
	2025													
Simi Valley	2023	22	4	13	8	7	30	505	10	10	6	4	32	651
	2024	21	6	4	1	6	44	293	17	9	17	5	18	461
	2025	23	2	3	4	9	46	287	21	7	9	8	15	454

Figure 3: Number of Public Fireworks Complaints by Month. Three-year history of public fireworks complaints. ([Att-001](#), [Att-002](#), [Att-003](#), [Att-004](#), [Att-005](#))

* VCSO data includes the cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Ojai, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, and the unincorporated areas of Ventura County

**Data not provided as of report publication

As reflected in Figure 3 above, despite varied efforts by different governmental agencies to educate the public about fireworks, the annual total of public complaints about fireworks has remained about the same over the last three years.

VCFD: The Civil Grand Jury learned that fires are frequently attributed to fireworks. ([Ref-001](#)) From 2023 to 2025, there were 107 fire calls to VCFD where fireworks were a contributing factor. ([Att-006](#)) In June 2024 a two-alarm fire was reported in Simi Valley. The heat source was determined to be fireworks, and the fire grew to just under five acres. The incident required dispatching 11 fire trucks, two helicopters, and a dozer. The fire was extinguished approximately 19 hours later. All firefighting costs incurred were the responsibility of VCFD (no cost sharing with the state). ([Ref-001](#), [Att-007](#))

Animal Services: Fireworks explosions impact our beloved pets. In interviews with VCAS personnel, the Civil Grand Jury learned that the agency does not compile statistics on fireworks-related events (such as animals escaping yards, surrendering of animals by their owners, lost animals). Instead, they acknowledge that they receive anecdotal information from residents

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about fireworks frightening their pets, which in turn causes trauma to some animals or leads to runaways. It also contributes to people dropping off animals at VCAS for temporary caretaking. In response to the impact of July Fourth fireworks on our pets, the agency uses social media to reach out to the Ventura County community, offering support for animal owners during fireworks season. (Ref-011)

Because of the linear design of the buildings at VCAS, there is ongoing noise from the echoing of dog barking and, therefore, there is little effect from outside noises on the animals in the Camarillo shelter. (Ref-001)

Veterans, Retired Law Enforcement Personnel, Victims of Violent Crimes: Veterans suffering from PTSD can find July Fourth to be a challenge. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs addresses this directly on its website, stating, “While fireworks symbolize freedom, their sudden booms, flashing lights, and smoky trails can trigger intense reactions for those who’ve experienced trauma, especially combat veterans. Loud noises often resemble gunfire. The unpredictability of neighborhood displays can shatter a veteran’s sense of safety.” (Ref-012) The Civil Grand Jury interviewed some Ventura County veterans who confirmed their reactions to fireworks are like those seen nationally. (Ref-001) Law enforcement officers who have experienced shootings and victims of violent crimes also experience trauma from fireworks explosions. (Ref-001)

Hospital Emergency Room Visits: Hospitals and other agencies in the U.S. voice concern about injuries caused by fireworks. (Ref-013, Ref-013a, Ref-013b, Ref-013c) According to the U.S. Product Safety Commission, children under the age of 15 and adults between 25 and 44 are the age groups most likely to be injured by fireworks and end up in the hospital emergency room. (Ref-014) In 2024 an estimated 14,700 people were treated in emergency rooms nationwide due to fireworks injuries. (Ref-014) In Ventura County, hospital emergency rooms experience an influx of fireworks-related injuries, mainly to the hand and the foot, during the days surrounding the Fourth of July. However, VCMC does not increase staffing during these days, so, although there is an influx of fireworks-related incidents at the emergency room during fireworks season, there is no additional cost to the hospital budget. (Ref-001)

Police Agencies’ Responses to Fireworks Complaints

As far back as 2017 Oxnard held community-fireworks discussions with city, police and fire department management. In mid-2025 the Oxnard Police Department involved members from the eight active neighborhood council associations as well as city and fire department management out of concern about citizens’ complaints to the police department. The police department acted upon input from citizens and implemented the department’s professional expertise and experience to create a best-practice model of responding to and enforcing violations of fireworks ordinances. (Ref-001) (Att-017a)

In 2024 Oxnard introduced fixed-wing aircraft to support enforcement. Oxnard Police Department has also implemented community-outreach efforts through Facebook, Instagram, radio station broadcasts, and its own website to educate the public about fireworks. In addition,

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Oxnard started sending short-term-rental hosts an advance-warning letter about the city's fireworks enforcement. (Ref-001) ([Att-017a](#))

All law enforcement agencies staff up to increase patrol personnel around July Fourth to deal with fireworks complaints. This is done through paying overtime, pulling staff off other duties or canceling time off. The goal is to be fully staffed. During this period, utilizing staff to respond to fireworks complaints removes them from other important duties and their day-to-day expertise. (Ref-001)

Oxnard uses a priority system to classify calls to its dispatch center. Calls about fireworks that provide nonspecific information (such as, "I hear fireworks exploding a couple of blocks away") are given a lower Priority 7. Calls about fireworks that give a specific address, vehicle information, name of person, or a more specific location identifier are given a higher Priority 3. The Priority 7 calls are typically broadcast to officers, but officers might not be assigned because of the nonspecific nature of the call. No other law enforcement jurisdiction in Ventura County uses a prioritizing system to manage fireworks complaints. (Ref-001) ([Att-018](#))

Documentation of complaints varies among agencies. Some record detailed statistics; others don't. (Ref-001)

In addition to enhanced staffing around July Fourth, Oxnard also has implemented additional strategies in anticipation of the surge in fireworks activity, including:

- Data-driven maps of the City of Oxnard displaying snapshots of fireworks activity, used to assist asset deployments within city limits (see Figure 4, below, showing a point-in-time snapshot of fireworks activity on July 4, 2025).
- Pre-holiday deployments: Neighborhood Policing Teams and Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Team, which involves using drones.
- Deployment of fixed-wing aircraft for thermal imaging to record specific parcel numbers, which can result in citations.

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street (difficult to attribute to a specific person); or offenders scattering before police officers arrive.

- If law enforcement issues a civil citation for fireworks discharge through a host liability ordinance (explained below), in some cases an appeal hearing officer may lower the civil fine, which can undermine the effect of the civil citation.

Other Efforts to Reduce Fireworks Incidents

A host liability ordinance is used in situations where a property owner rents their property on a short-term basis (e.g. through Airbnb). Several Ventura County cities have adopted host liability ordinances. ([Ref-015](#), [Ref-015a](#), [Ref-016](#), [Ref-016a](#), [Ref-017](#), [Ref-017a](#), [Ref-018](#), [Ref-018a](#)) Under this type of ordinance the property owner can be held liable if the owner has not informed tenants of the illegality of shooting off or possessing fireworks and has reason to believe the tenants might do so. There is no countywide host liability ordinance. In those cities that have host liability ordinances (listed in the table below), Ventura County law enforcement agencies send letters to short-term rental landlords in advance of the Fourth of July to advise about the ordinance and the landlord's responsibility to advise renters of fireworks ordinances in the city. (Ref-001)

Police departments in Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, and Ventura choose to issue administrative (civil) fines through host liability ordinances to violators of fireworks regulations, rather than with a Health and Safety Code violation. A civil citation must meet a "preponderance of evidence" standard, while a Health and Safety Code violation requires proof "beyond a reasonable doubt," a more difficult standard to meet. (Ref-001)

The table below identifies communities that have host liability ordinances that address fireworks. Beyond the cities listed, host liability ordinances are not in effect for Simi Valley and all other areas of Ventura County, including the cities and unincorporated areas where VCSO has primary law enforcement responsibility:

City	Year Adopted	Initial Violation Fine	Subsequent Violation Fine
Oxnard	2018	<u>\$250 (safe and sane)</u> \$1,000 (dangerous)	<u>2nd = \$500; 3 or more=\$1,000 (safe/sane)</u>
Santa Paula	2020	\$500	\$1,000
Ventura	2018	\$132	2 nd =\$264; 3 or more =\$396
Port Hueneme	2018	\$250	2 nd =\$500; 3 or more=\$1,000

Figure 5. Various Ventura County cities host liability ordinances ([Ref-015a](#), [Ref-016a](#), [Ref-017a](#), [Ref-018](#), [Att-009](#), [Att-010](#))

The Sheriff's Office contracts with five Ventura County cities — Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, and Thousand Oaks — for law enforcement services. Of these five cities, only Fillmore has a municipal code of strict liability, where deputies can cite the property owner for illegal fireworks being discharged from their property. ([Ref-018a](#)) Moorpark is researching the option of

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implementing a host liability ordinance regarding fireworks but has not acted as of this report. ([Ref-001](#))

In 2022 the staff of Simi Valley introduced Municipal Ordinance 1338 for consideration. This ordinance proposed making possession, sale, and discharge of fireworks illegal. In addition it proposed a host liability ordinance regarding fireworks. To the Civil Grand Jury's knowledge, this ordinance was never approved by the Simi Valley City Council. ([Ref-025](#))

Below is an overview of civil citations issued and collected through host liability ordinances that relate to fireworks. ([Ref-001](#))

City	Year	# Issued	\$ Issued	\$ Collected	# Dismissed via Appeal
Oxnard	2023	59	\$41,500	\$8,100	9
	2024	50	\$35,000	\$12,025	7
	2025	59	\$47,000	\$12,175	5
Santa Paula	**				
Ventura	2023	9	\$2,188	\$996	1
	2024	15	\$12,396	\$6,132	2
	2025	13	\$6,056	\$3,160	0
Port Hueneme	2023	0	\$0	\$0	
	2024	0	\$0	\$0	
	2025	0	\$0	\$0	

Figure 6. Host Liability Ordinance Fines, by City. ([Att-011](#), [Att-012](#), [Att-013](#))

** No information available or not tracked

In addition to the use of host liability ordinances, the VCISO, police departments, and the Ventura County District Attorney have taken other steps to reduce the incidences of fireworks discharge in advance of July Fourth. ([Ref-001](#)) These efforts include the use of press releases in advance of the holiday, social media, tip lines, emails, warning letters, message trailers on streets, pre-holiday deployments, mapping tools (to help identify high-incident areas), and enhanced staffing around July Fourth. Despite these efforts no agency has "solved the problem" (as is evidenced by the ongoing number of public complaints). Sheriff and police leaders state that stopping discharge of fireworks remains an elusive goal, and it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the outreach efforts through social media and public-service announcements. ([Ref-001](#))

Use of Drone Technology

The advent of drone technology has given law enforcement additional tools to respond to fireworks complaints. Using drones as a first responder offers an alternative to dispatching personnel as the first step in securing public safety, including the discharge of fireworks.

Advantages of using drones in response to fireworks complaints include:

- A drone can arrive at a location sooner than deployed officers. Drones can be based in a stationary location in a pod on top of a building, enabling stationing in strategic locations. As

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an alternative, they can be housed in a patrol car and transported to the site for deployment. (Ref-001)

- With GPS and video capability, drones might eliminate the need for deployment of officers to a site, which can accomplish two goals: obtaining information and reducing officers' exposure to possible harmful behavior from individuals. Officers responding to fireworks complaints may find themselves in large crowds, outnumbered, and at risk of injury. (Ref-001)
- Information obtained by drones can include the address of an offense and video or photos of offenders in the act, which can be used as evidence supporting a civil citation. In addition, drones offer more flexibility and quicker response times than from the use of a manned helicopter. (Ref-001)

Requirements for Using Drone Technology

For government agencies to operate a drone or Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), the drone pilot must be Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Part 107, certified (Ref-019), or the agency must obtain a signed FAA Certificate of Waiver (Ref-020) or Authorization. Law enforcement agencies can obtain waivers of standard drone regulations through application to the FAA. In late January 2026, the City of Elk Grove, CA, obtained an FAA waiver, allowing it to operate drones at an altitude of 400 feet and beyond the operator's visual line of sight. (Ref-021) This exceeds the normal regulation, restricting the operating of a drone to within the operator's visual line of sight. Other waivers may be possible in the future.

Current Use of Drones by Ventura County Law Enforcement Agencies

The use of drone technology by law enforcement agencies in Ventura County varies in the stages of deployment. The following table outlines the number of drones in use by each jurisdiction:

Jurisdiction	Number of Drones 2026	Number with thermal cameras	Number with Capability to Record GPS Coordinates	Expected Number of Drones 2027
VCSO	23	23	23	24
Oxnard	12	12	10	15*
Ventura	15	2	2	12-15****
Port Hueneme	4	4	4	4
Santa Paula	**	***	***	***
Simi Valley	***			***

Figure 7. Current Drone Inventory. Various Ventura County cities drone inventory as of April 2026. (Att-014, Att-015, Att-016, Att-017)

* assuming none taken out of service because of age

** seeking bids for two drones

*** data not provided

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**** no additional funds allocated to supplement existing fleet

Concerns About Drone Usage

Privacy is an evolving issue related to drone use by law enforcement agencies. Drones can be used in a reactive mode, such as in response to a public complaint about fireworks, or they can be used proactively, such as patrolling an area that is considered a “hot spot” for illegal-fireworks activity. There is a concern within law enforcement that the proactive use of drones might be perceived by the public as an invasion of privacy. ([Ref-001](#)) California Civil Code 1708.8 addresses privacy protections as they relate to drone usage. ([Ref-022](#), [Ref-022a](#)) Law enforcement must be cognizant of this code and any waivers for law enforcement in making decisions about drone usage.

Interagency Cooperation

All law enforcement officials interviewed for this report stated that there is ongoing cooperation among the cities and county law enforcement agencies and VCFD. There is a monthly meeting of the Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee, comprising law enforcement officers from the Sheriff’s office, each Ventura County police department, and the California Highway Patrol, to discuss procedures. Mutual aid is part of the cooperation process. ([Ref-001](#)) Mutual aid is a formal, voluntary agreement between agencies to share personnel, equipment, and resources during emergencies, large-scale events, or when local capabilities are overwhelmed. These pre-planned, authorized arrangements allow neighboring agencies to provide support, improving safety and efficiency for incidents like natural disasters, riots or mass-casualty events. ([Ref-023](#))

Improved Countywide Response to Fireworks Complaints?

With the exception of Fillmore during a specified period of time, discharge of fireworks of all kinds is illegal in all parts of Ventura County. This is the result of individual cities passing fireworks ordinances (Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula, Fillmore) and through an ordinance from the Ventura County Fire Protection District, which has jurisdiction over the unincorporated areas of Ventura County and the cities of Ojai, Port Hueneme, Moorpark, Camarillo, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks.

If county and city agencies are able to establish a better-coordinated approach to education and enforcement of fireworks regulations, this could include:

- A unified approach for enforcement of fireworks regulations.
- Coordinated use of resources (personnel and technology) to address the most egregious offenses, target “hot spots,” and focus on repeat offenders.

FINDINGS

- F-01.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that there is no public consensus regarding the discharge of fireworks, even if it is deemed illegal.
- F-02.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that most fireworks complaints are nonspecific in location and do not result in a warning or citation.
- F-03.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that despite numerous and varied efforts by law enforcement, the fire department, and the district attorney to educate the public, the number of complaints has not decreased.
- F-04.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that there are varied responses to fireworks complaints among Ventura County law enforcement agencies.
- F-05.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that Fillmore is the only city in Ventura County that allows the purchase and/or discharge of “safe and sane” fireworks, and some of these fireworks are illegally transported to, and discharged in, other parts of the county.
- F-06.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the use of drone technology to respond to complaints provides benefits to law enforcement, including quicker response times and better identification of offenders.
- F-07.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that there are occasions when civil citations have been issued and citizens can challenge and go through an appeal process to reduce or eliminate any fines. The reduction or elimination of any fines impacts the effectiveness of enforcement actions.
- F-08.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that, with the exception of Fillmore during a limited time around July 4th, through a set of city and Ventura County Fire Protection District regulations, discharge of fireworks is illegal throughout Ventura County.
- F-09.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the cities of Oxnard, Santa Paula, Ventura, and Port Hueneme have fireworks host liability ordinances.
- F-10.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that the Oxnard Police Department has been a leading Ventura County law enforcement agency in implementing strategies to respond to public complaints about fireworks.
- F-11.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that there is no fireworks host liability ordinance that applies to the unincorporated areas of Ventura County.
- F-12.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury finds that Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Port Hueneme have existing fireworks host liability ordinances; that Fillmore has a strict liability ordinance regarding fireworks; and that Ojai, Moorpark, Camarillo, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks do not currently have fireworks host liability ordinances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R-01.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors pass a host liability ordinance regarding fireworks, applicable to the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. (F-11)
- R-02.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Ojai, Moorpark, Camarillo, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks develop their own fireworks host liability ordinances. (F-12)
- R-03.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Fire Department maintain ongoing communication with CAL FIRE’s Public Safety Fireworks Enforcement Task Force to learn about recommendations to enhance enforcement and compliance with fireworks laws. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06)
- R-04.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Fire Department interface regularly with Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee to inform the committee about recommendations from CAL FIRE’s Fireworks Enforcement Task Force. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06)
- R-05.** The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Fire Department and Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee meet regularly to strategize best practices to enhance responses to fireworks complaints and establish best practices for enforcement of fireworks regulations. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, F-10, F-11, F-12)

RESPONSES

Responses invited, but not required, from:

The following appointed officials within 60 days:

Fire Chief, Ventura County Fire Department (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, F-10, F-11, F-12, R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)

Responses required from:

The following elected officers within 60 days:

Ventura County Sheriff’s Office (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, F-11, F-12, R-04, R-05)

The following governing bodies within 90 days:

Ventura County Board of Supervisors (R-01, R-03, R-04, R-05)

City of Camarillo City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-12, R-02, R-04)

City of Fillmore City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, R-04, R-05)

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City of Moorpark City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-12, R-02, R-04)

City of Ojai City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-12, R-02, R-04)

City of Oxnard City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, F-10, R-04, R-05)

City of Port Hueneme City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, R-04)

City of Santa Paula City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, R-04)

City of Simi Valley City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-12, R-02, R-04)

City of Thousand Oaks City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-12, R-02, R-04)

City of Ventura City Council (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09, R-04, R-05)

COMMENDATION

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury commends the Oxnard Police Department for setting an example for responding to and enforcing violators and violations of fireworks ordinances. This was demonstrated by being the first police department in Ventura County to solicit community input regarding fireworks and in its decision making and development of strategies to respond to fireworks complaints.

REFERENCES

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ATTACHMENTS

- Att-001.** Ventura County Sheriff's Office. Fireworks Calls, 2023-2025.
- Att-002.** Oxnard Police Department. Fireworks Calls, 2023-2025.
- Att-003.** Ventura Police Department. Fireworks Calls, 2023-2025.
- Att-004.** City Port Hueneme. Fireworks Calls, 2023-2025.
- Att-005.** City of Simi Valley. Fireworks Calls, 2023-2025.
- Att-006.** Ventura County Fire Department. Fireworks Cause 2023-2025.
- Att-007.** City of Simi Valley. 2024 Fire Resource Details, June 28, 2024 – June 29, 2024.
- Att-008a.** Oxnard Police Department. Types of Fireworks.
- Att-008b.** City of Oxnard. Traditional Reality of Fireworks.
- Att-008c.** City of Oxnard. 2024 Fireworks Recap, September 18, 2025.
- Att-009.** City of Port Hueneme. Host Liability Fines, 2023-2025.
- Att-010.** City of Ventura. Host Liability Fines, 2026.

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- [Att-011.](#) Oxnard Police Department. Fines and Dismissals, 2023-2025.
- [Att-012.](#) Ventura Police Department. Fines and Dismissals, 2023-2025.
- [Att-013.](#) City of Port Hueneme. Fines and Dismissals, 2023-2025.
- [Att-014.](#) Oxnard Police Department. Drone Inventory, 2026.
- [Att-015.](#) Ventura Police Department. Drone Inventory, 2026.
- [Att-016.](#) City of Port Hueneme. Drone Inventory, 2026.
- [Att-017.](#) Ventura County Sheriff's Office Drone Information
- [Att-017a.](#) Oxnard PD Community Meeting Regarding Fireworks (Recollections)
- [Att-018.](#) Oxnard PD Priority Assignment of incoming calls

GLOSSARY

<u>TERM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft System
VCAS	Ventura County Animal Services
VCMC	Ventura County Medical Center
VCFD	Ventura County Fire Department
VCSSO	Ventura County Sheriff Office