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**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 11/30/2023 9:24:01 AM  
**Subject:** Memo to Council - Fireworks Ban Retrospective  
**Attachments:** VFRS - ADM - Memo to Mayor Council - A Lookback on the Fireworks Ban\_2023-11-29 (002).pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Chief Karen Fry in regard to the Fireworks Ban.

In 2021, a ban on fireworks use in Vancouver was implemented. This ban was in response to the growing numbers of incidents involving fireworks – among those were fires that were caused by fireworks. This memo is a retrospective on the ban and the results so far.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chief Fry at [karen.fry@vancouver.ca](mailto:karen.fry@vancouver.ca)

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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City of Vancouver  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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## MEMORANDUM

November 30, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Karen Fry, Fire Chief/General Manager, Fire Rescue Services

SUBJECT: A Lookback on the Fireworks Ban

RTS #: N/A

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### A Retrospective on the 2021 Fireworks Ban

#### Introduction

In 2021, a ban on fireworks use in Vancouver was implemented. This ban was in response to the growing numbers of incidents involving fireworks – among those were fires that were caused by fireworks. This memo is a retrospective on the ban and the results so far.

#### Background

Prior to the ban, Vancouver faced recurring challenges with the use of fireworks. Halloween and other celebratory occasions resulted in a surge of fire-related incidents, posing threats to public safety and causing serious damage to properties. In the five years leading up to the ban fires, the data became increasingly compelling that something needed to be done:

- **19 fires** caused by fireworks annually from 2016 to 2020
- **\$5.6M** in damage caused by fireworks fires from 2016 to 2020
  - This includes **\$4.2M** of damage from a single fire in 2019
- **32 fires** in 2020 the final year before the ban

With the number of firework fires growing annually, intervention was needed.

## Strategy for Reduction

There had previously been an amendment to the Fire By-law in 2007 to restrict the purchase and discharge of fireworks, but with retailers able to sell fireworks and only moderate restriction on the buyers, fireworks were still obtainable by many in the community.

To target this, Council adopted a motion in October 2019 calling for the development of a plan to ban the retail sale of consumer fireworks to the public.

The result of this motion led to the amendment of the Fire By-Law to ban the sale and use of fireworks by the general public allowing for fireworks to be used at community events (ie. Lunar New Year, Diwali, Canada, etc...) by a certified firework technician holding a Federal Fireworks Operator Certificate and a Municipal Fire Permit from VFRS. This change came into effect for 2021.

## The Outcome, So Far

The implementation of the fireworks ban stands as a crucial step in ensuring the safety and security of our community. As Fire Chief, witnessing the significant reduction in fires and damage caused by fireworks, I am proud to reflect on the success and impact of this decision and fireworks ban implemented by Council in 2021.

The impact of the ban on fire-related incidents has been nothing short of remarkable. Here are some of the key data points we have seen so far from 2021 to 2023.

- **Firework Fires:** Annual Fires Pre-Ban 19, Annual Fires Post-Ban 6
- **Fire Damage:** Less than \$13,000 per year since the ban
- **Number of Fires on Halloween\*:** Pre-Ban 10, Post-Ban 3
  - *\*Halloween includes October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>*

The success of the ban highlights the power of education, community engagement, and the adaptability of the community to embrace new, safer celebration methods. It demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding the well-being of all community members and creating an environment where celebrations can be enjoyed while mitigating the risk of fires and injuries.

## Conclusion

The fireworks ban has been a major success in reducing fireworks-related fires and is a triumph in enhancing public safety. It exemplifies the significance of prioritizing public safety and the willingness of Council to ensure the well-being of our community. The by-law in its current form is working as intended. VFRS will continue monitor the ban's results and educate the community to provide a safe way to celebrate.



Karen Fry  
Fire Chief/General Manager  
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