



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2023–2024 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grand Jury: Illegal Fireworks “Uncontrolled Burn”

2023–2024 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report identifies the out-of-control illegal fireworks problem in the city.

SAN FRANCISCO (PR NEWSWIRE) May 28, 2024—Frustrated citizens and unsafe fireworks deployments are the result of little to no coordination amongst departments, a lack of official metrics defined or tracked to scope the problem, limited public education and community engagement, and inconsistent messaging to the public about how to report firework activity, a new Civil Grand Jury report found.

“All private fireworks are illegal in San Francisco, yet they continue to be a constant problem throughout the year, especially on July 4th,” said Bart Fisher, Committee Chairperson. “It’s important to get city departments working together towards solutions.”

Fireworks are dangerous, causing many permanent scars; lost limbs, fingers and toes; diminished and full hearing loss and partial and full loss of sight in one or both eyes. They can even be deadly, as San Francisco learned this past New Year’s Eve when one of its own residents was killed on Treasure Island. Fireworks also traumatize pets, children, autistic residents, dementia patients, veterans and others with PTSD, as well as wildlife. They pollute the environment, start fires and cause property and content loss. They also are increasingly being used as weapons in large gatherings and protests.

The Jury report estimates that:

- Approximately 100,000 San Francisco households, or one in four, have a pet frightened by fireworks
- Over 3,500 San Francisco children under the age of 5 are likely frightened or bothered by fireworks
- An estimated 10,000 San Francisco residents with some form of autism may be affected by fireworks
- An estimated 12,500 San Francisco residents have some level of dementia and can be agitated by fireworks
- In any given year, an estimated 2,500 San Francisco combat veterans and 37,700 San Francisco adults suffering from PTSD may be triggered by the explosions from fireworks

Illegal fireworks affect our entire community: family members, neighbors, friends and co-workers suffer to varying degrees from annoyance, medically meaningful upset to bodily injury. Physical structures set afire and harm to local flora and fauna cannot be dismissed as minor and transient problems limited to the 4th of July.

To read the full report which includes the Jury's recommendations, please visit

<https://www.sf.gov/resource/2024/civil-grand-jury-reports-2023-2024>.

About the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

The Superior Court selects 19 San Franciscans to serve year-long terms as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City and County government by reviewing documents and interviewing public officials and private individuals. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues reports of its findings and recommendations. Agencies identified in the report must respond to these findings and recommendations within either 60 or 90 days, and the Board of Supervisors conducts a public hearing on each Civil Grand Jury report after those responses are submitted. For more information, visit the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury website:

<https://www.sf.gov/departments/civil-grand-jury>.

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