

NORTHGLENN POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM
#09-2020

DATE: June 22, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members

THROUGH: Heather Geyer, City Manager *Hmg*

FROM: James S. May, Jr., Chief of Police *JSM/217*
Heidi Walts, Police Commander

SUBJECT: Fourth of July Fireworks Enforcement

PURPOSE

To inform City Council on the Northglenn Police Department's 4th of July fireworks enforcement.

BACKGROUND

On July 4, 2019, the police department received 247 calls for service in a 24-hour period starting at 6 a.m. on the 4th. Of the 247 calls, 117 were fireworks complaints. As July 4th presents one of the heaviest calls for service, every sworn officer, including command staff, will be working. Staffing July 4th is a challenge for all agencies, and enforcement on the night of July 4th is typically limited due to personnel assignments to the city's fireworks event and associated traffic control.

Based on City Council's direction last year, the police department is adding all additional resources to work on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July to target the use of illegal fireworks. As reported last year, the department's effort to mitigate this issue in 2020 will be not to allow any officers to have time off on the 4th of July. This will increase our staffing and designate teams to enforce fireworks violations in our high-call areas. Last year, Council adopted an ordinance that provides for additional enforcement capabilities by the department. As such, the department will staff enforcement teams on these dates that will specifically target any fireworks complaints that are received.

This year presents some unique challenges with COVID-19 still impacting communities across the country as well as our community. Although the department will have every officer working, the assignments and responsibilities may not be the same as in previous years. The City of Northglenn has canceled the 2020 fireworks show and all other events held in and around E.B. Rains, Jr. Memorial Park. This will have an impact on the number of people that typically come to E.B. Rains, Jr. Memorial Park to celebrate. However, the department has recognized that even though there will not be a fireworks display, the tradition of celebrating the 4th of July at E.B. Rains, Jr. Memorial Park by the residents of Northglenn will be occurring and bringing residents into and around the park, but not to the extent a typical year would. Officers and park rangers will be assigned to the park to provide a safe environment for residents, along with enforcing all park regulations and any fireworks complaints in and around the area of the park.

With the numbers in the park expected to be greatly decreased from a typical event year, the department will be assigning all additional officers not working patrol shifts or the park to fireworks enforcement teams. Every ward throughout the city will be assigned fireworks enforcement teams

to specifically address any complaints surrounding fireworks in that area. This allows the fireworks complaints to be managed without pulling resources from the street that are handling other priority calls for service. Since the majority of fireworks complaints are received in the late afternoon and evening hours, these teams will begin working at 3 p.m., with the last team's shift ending at 3 a.m. on July 5. At that time, the patrol shifts will take over any fireworks complaints that are received. Additionally, the department will have fireworks enforcement teams working on July 3 and July 5 to handle fireworks complaints from 3 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Officers will also be assigned to provide traffic control for the Cool Car Cruise during the morning on the 4th of July as the vehicles travel to each of the wards. Once these officers have completed the 'flyover,' they will be assigned to cover fireworks complaints and park security.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Although the department will be making schedule adjustments to cover some of the positions and shifts, there will still be overtime costs associated with this plan.

EDUCATION

Efforts to educate residents about the new fireworks ordinance have been ongoing since the ordinance was adopted. Education began as early as January for the New Year's holiday. The City of Northglenn, along with the police department, has provided fireworks information on the city website as well as on social media platforms. The police department has also worked with homeowners associations to disseminate information through their networks. Printed signs addressing the ordinance and fines were made available for residents to pick up at the Justice Center as of May 28. To improve targeted enforcement, the police department has been tracking and mapping fireworks complaints that have been received through calls for service and Access Northglenn since April 2020. The police department is taking a zero-tolerance approach to fireworks violations. The expectation to issue a summons, if there is probable cause, has been communicated to officers.

This operational plan is currently based on the Governor's Orders for Safer at Home and in the Vast, Great Outdoors effective until July 1. This plan could change if there are any new orders issued between now and July 4.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council Members have any questions or comments, they may contact Chief James S. May, Jr., at 303.450.8967, or jmay@northglenn.org, or Commander Heidi Walts at 303.450.8962, or hwalts@northglenn.org.