

November Fireworks days (Guy Fawkes – 5 Nov and Diwali – 9 Nov)

Statement on official Fireworks policy of City of Johannesburg

Issued by: Cllr Tim Sargeant DA Council Spokesperson on Environmental Matters

Rights of residents and domestic and other animals

Annual illegal noise and consequent animal terror

"Fireworks Month" (November) is around the corner and the annual Johannesburg fireworks noise frenzy is about to affect every resident of the City as well as their pets and other suburban animals and birds.

Improper use of fireworks is illegal in Johannesburg and it is important to remind residents about the City's strict fireworks regulations and about the rights of residents to demand Council action against illegal fireworks usage.

A few facts:

- Unless special Council authorisation has been applied for and granted, there are only 11 days annually when residents are allowed to "light or ignite" fireworks. Guy Fawkes and Divali are such days. (R 500 fine on other days).
- Except for New Year's Eve, the only permissible time period for igniting fireworks on these days is between 19h00 and 22h00 (7 to 10 pm). (R 500 fine at any other time).
- No person may light or ignite fireworks in any place where animals are present (R 1 000 fine). This includes domestic homes.
- No person may allow any minor (child) under his or her control to "use, light or ignite" fireworks (R 1 500 fine). No exceptions to this rule.
- No person may use fireworks on any agricultural holding or at any school or senior citizens' residence without special Council authorisation (R 1 000 to R 1 500 fine). This authorisation must be sought well in advance of intended day.
- No person can use fireworks within 500 metres of any petrol depot or petrol station without special Council authorisation (R 1 500 fine).
- No person or organisation can "present a fireworks display" unless formally authorised to do so by the Council (at least 14 days' notice before the display is required by Council to consider such an application). Authorisation is also required from the Civil Aviation Authority and the Chief Inspector of Explosives. (Multiple fines of R 1 500 are applicable).
- At such a display (should permission be granted) a pyrotechnist and SA Police Services explosives expert must be present at all times. (R 1 500 fines).
- No person may deal in fireworks (sell or make available) unless they hold a fireworks license in terms of the Explosives Act as well as the written authority of the Chief Fire Officer.(R 1 500 fine).

The reign of terror which afflicts Johannesburg's large pet population when people indiscriminately (and often criminally) ignite noisy fireworks at all times of the day and night gets worse every year.

Firm enforcement of the bylaws will assist in reducing the noise and panic levels and allow people (and their pets) to plan for "noisy" periods thus producing a quieter, safer environment for all concerned.

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