



Uncle John's Fireworks

We do the majority of all fireworks shows in Edmonton

- over 400 shows in Edmonton

Until 2019 community leaders did hundreds of safe shows

- No accidents by these untrained professionals.

Edmonton has 25 years of safe consumer fireworks and firecrackers shows with a 100% safety record.

Proposed Changes To Fire Rescue Bylaw 15309 Amendments

I'm asking you to consider these changes today:

- Council retain the power to set fees in this bylaw.
- Fees be removed from permits for the use of consumer fireworks and Lunar New Year's firecrackers.
- That you direct Edmonton Fire to revert to their own 2019 regulations for consumer fireworks permits
 - Including removing firework inspections from the bylaw.
- That you restore language exempting non-profits from the schedule of fees.

Council Must Retain Control of Fees

- Right now all fees collected by Edmonton Fire are 0.4% of Edmonton Fire's budget.
 - \$900,000 fees against a budget of \$223 million.
- But the revised bylaw would allow Edmonton Fire to charge fees to recoup their growing administrative costs.
- As an example, fireworks permits become more complex once or twice a year.
 - Currently total fireworks permit fees are maybe \$7,000.
 - To cover those costs our fees would have to be in the thousands of dollars.

Fees for the use of Consumer Fireworks and Firecrackers are A Barrier to Communities and Rare Outside of Edmonton

- Consumer fireworks permit fees only started in 2017.
- There has never been any fees for the use of firecrackers.
- Most jurisdictions don't charge for any fireworks permit.
 - We operate across Alberta and Edmonton is the only place we pay fees.
- Community leagues have been told fees are intended to “prevent a free for all situation”. They are intended to be a barrier to communities.
- 40% of Lunar New Year's Eve participants withdrew when fees were threatened last year.
- These fees and overtime inspections were added by misleading Council.

“Fire Prevention charges fees for fireworks permits ... These fees are charged on a cost recovery basis and are necessary so to prevent a ‘free for all’ situation.

- From a Community League Park Use Licence 2023

Inspections of already Safe Consumer Fireworks Shows are Unnecessary

- We have never had bylaw officer inspections of consumer fireworks shows in Edmonton.
- No other jurisdiction in Canada has inspections of consumer fireworks shows.
- But this past week an aggressive program of inspections has been announced together with a more complex permit regime.
 - A fire prevention officer will always be able to find some kind of small, meaningless violation of the many complex, detailed rules in the current permit process.
- Under the proposed bylaw inspections would be paid through fees with added administration costs.
- Unnecessary fire inspections are harassment paid for by the taxpayer.

I fear that the new inspection regime will be used as a pretext to end our many safe community fireworks shows. Please remove these inspections and simplify the consumer fireworks permit regime.

Edmonton's Fireworks Regulations From Edmonton's Website in 2019.

Fireworks Permits

Requirements

To qualify for a permit, you must demonstrate:

- You are the property owner or, if you are not the property owner, you have written permission from the owner and proof of insurance coverage
- You have at least 400 square metres of space to set off the fireworks (10 metres in every direction)

Obtain a Fireworks Permit

You can apply for a Fireworks permit at either of these locations:

The Fire Prevention Office

 **10425-106 Avenue**

(Access from the northeast corner of the building)

Monday to Fridays: 8am-4:30pm

Edmonton Service Centre

2nd Floor

 **10111 104 Avenue NW**

Monday to Fridays: 8am-4:30pm

Edmonton's Regulations Do Not Improve Safety

- Now there are pages of requirements and nine or more documents must be submitted for each permit.
- Requirements increase once or twice a year, most recently last week.
- Council has directed that these shows should be done professional fireworks companies but that doesn't mean we need a complicated permit process.

I am fearful that inspections coupled with the most recent increases in the permit requirements will be used to end community shows.

Since 2023 Lunar New Year's Eve Firecrackers Permits Have Been Extremely Difficult

- This community has decades long history of safe use of firecrackers in Edmonton.
- For decades permits were given to the Chinese Business Association for the asking.
- Edmonton requires multiple complex fireworks applications
 - About 15 permit applications.
- A permit fee will be charged for each application - far more than any other fireworks display.
 - In 2025 total firecracker permit fees will be between \$1200 and \$2700 versus \$181 for any other fireworks show.
- Firecracker permits have to be submitted 20 business days before the event
 - 5 business days for any other fireworks permit.
- I have volunteered to help this community since new regulations in 2023.
 - Previously they were allowed to use firecrackers themselves.

Exempt Nonprofits and Charities from This Fee Schedule

- When bylaw 15309 was created Council directed that nonprofits and charities be exempted.
 - This was removed without consulting Council in 2013.
- Many of these organizations obtain some or all of their funding from the City of Edmonton.
 - These fees transfer funds from City of Edmonton departments to Edmonton Fire.
- As discussed these fees are a tiny fraction of Edmonton Fire's budget but are designed to be a barrier for community groups.
- The bylaw changes would allow Edmonton Fire to charge their administrative overhead to everyone who needs a permit.

Community Leaders Will Keep Continue to Keep Their Communities Safe

- Safety is the first priority for communities sponsoring consumer fireworks shows and firecrackers.
- Canadian consumer fireworks are approved by the Canadian Government for use by any adult or even child supervised by an adult
 - Federal regulations say a permit is not required for consumer fireworks
 - Federal regulations require a permit for powerful display fireworks.
- Canadian consumer fireworks and firecrackers are 100% safe when used correctly.

Thank you for your time.

Proposed Changes to This Bylaw Amendment

- Council retain the power to set fees in this bylaw.
- Fees be removed from permits for the use of consumer fireworks and Lunar New Year's firecrackers.
- That you direct Edmonton Fire to revert to their own much simpler 2019 regulations and remove inspections.
- That you restore language exempting non-profits from the schedule of fees.