REPORTS

Item No. 8 Use of Fireworks on Private and Public Property

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Community Services laid the matter over to its March, 2027, meeting.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Allard,
That the matter be laid over to March 2027 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services.

Carried

Aleem Kanji, Chief Advocacy Officer, Canadian National Fireworks Association, submitted a communication in opposition to the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 4, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Assiniboia Community Committee, with the following amendments:

- Add the words “and sale” after the words “which govern the use”

- Delete Recommendation 2 in its entirety and renumber the remaining accordingly

and directed the Winnipeg Public Service to complete a cross jurisdictional scan and report back in 120 days on the use, permitting, and penalties for operating fireworks on private and public property.

The following persons submitted communications:

- Aleem Kanji, Chief Advocacy Officer, Canadian National Fireworks Association, with respect to the matter
- Councillor Lukes, Waverley West Ward, in support of the matter

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 3, 2025, the Assiniboia Community Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS fireworks are often used in celebration of joyous cultural or national holidays;

AND WHEREAS in urban environments fireworks can be very celebrative, but also can be very disruptive and dangerous;

AND WHEREAS many yards within the City of Winnipeg do not meet the minimum requirements to accommodate fireworks;

AND WHEREAS cities across Canada are implementing updated rules and guidelines related to setting off fireworks on private and public properties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to complete a cross jurisdictional scan and report back in 120 days on the use, permitting, and penalties for operating fireworks on private and public property, and include the following:

1. Comparisons of fines for the use of fireworks without a permit in other cities.

2. A listing of cities in which the use or sale of fireworks is banned.

3. Specific provisions from other jurisdictions which govern the use of fireworks on public and private property.

4. Additional recommendations to control the use of fireworks in the City of Winnipeg.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Use of Fireworks on Private and Public Property

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
L. Gilmour	C. Schmidt	N/A	J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fireworks in cities are becoming a growing concern across Canada. They can cause fires and increase safety risks for people, animals and property. At the same time, fireworks are an important part of many traditional and cultural celebrations.

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) was asked to review how other Canadian cities regulate the use of fireworks. Our review found that many cities use different rules and fines. Some cities allow fireworks only on specific dates. Others require users to have special training. Some limit or ban fireworks altogether.

The review confirmed that WFPS already has strong by-law provisions in place. Enforcement has been challenging because of the number of staff and resources required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service report back in the first quarter of 2027 with enforcement options based on the jurisdictional scan and in alignment with the By-law Enforcement Strategy's implementation and any future consolidated model for by-law enforcement.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On November 4, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Public Service to complete a cross jurisdictional scan and report back in 120 days on the use, permitting, and penalties for operating fireworks on private and public property, and include the following:

1. Comparisons of fines for the use of fireworks without a permit in other cities.

2. Specific provisions from other jurisdictions which govern the use and sale of fireworks on public and private property.

3. Additional recommendations to control the use of fireworks in the City of Winnipeg.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no immediate or direct financial implications.

Improved enforcement necessitates having adequate resources in place for enforcement efforts. The department may request additional Fire Prevention Officer Full Time Equivalent(s) in future budgets and negotiate changes to hours of work provisions through Collective Agreement bargaining.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Definitions

Consumer Fireworks or low hazard fireworks refers to fireworks intended for recreational use by the public. Consumer fireworks can be purchased by anyone over 18 years of age and often include Roman candles, sparklers, fountains, volcanoes and mines.

Display fireworks or high hazard fireworks are fireworks that can only be used and purchased by individuals who hold a current operator's certificate that is issued by the Federal Government and include items such as aerial shells, cakes, barrages, waterfalls, lances, set pieces and wheels.

Firecrackers are a small firework, that explode with a loud noise and are typically wrapped in paper and lit with a fuse. These are not legal in Canada.

Jurisdictional Scan

1. Comparisons of fines for the use of fireworks without a permit

City /Jurisdiction	Fine Amount	Comments/Link
Winnipeg, Manitoba	Up to $500	Permit required - permit holder must be 18 years of age or older, have 100 feet of clearance from all buildings and trees and have written consent of the property owner.

Calgary, Alberta	Minimum fine of $500 and up to $1000 a day with a maximum of $100,000	Website: Fireworks, pyrotechnics and movie special effects
Edmonton, Alberta	Up to $10,000	Website: Firework Permits and Safety | City of Edmonton
Vancouver, British Columbia	Minimum fine of $1,000. Maximum fine of $50,000 upon conviction.	Website: City of Vancouver- Fire Bylaw
Victoria, British Columbia	$200 minimum, up to $10,000.	Website: Fireworks Bylaw | City of Victoria
Brandon, Manitoba	Maximum fine of $1,000.	Website: City of Brandon- Fireworks Bylaw
Moncton, New Brunswick	Minimum fine of $240. Maximum fine of $5,200.	Website: City of Moncton - Fire Protection Bylaw
Barrie, Ontario	$180-$490	Fines depend on the details surrounding the situation. Base is $365 with additional fines for dangerous conditions Website: Fireworks Safety | City of Barrie***
Brampton, Ontario	$500 for setting off without permit. $500 for allowing to be set off on private property without permit.	Website: City of Brampton | By-Law Enforcement | Fireworks
Hamilton, Ontario	A fine not exceeding more than $5,000, as per the Ontario Provincial Offences Act	Website: Hamilton_Nuisance_Party_By-law.docx Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.33 | ontario.ca

London, Ontario	First conviction maximum fine of $5,000, subsequent convictions of maximum of $10,000.	Website: Fireworks By-law - PW-11 | City of London
Mississauga, Ontario	Minimum fine of $500. Maximum fine of $100,000. in the case of a multiple or continuing offence, for each offence included in the multiple offence, a minimum fine of $500, and a maximum fine not exceeding $10,000, and the total of all fines for each included offence is not limited to $100,000	Website: Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law 0182-2023
Ottawa, Ontario	$260 per offence, including a victim surcharge. The City's Bylaw is currently proposing to increase the fees to $500 for non safety related offences i.e. failing to clean up after discharge, and $1,000 for safety related issues i.e. discharging fireworks on a street or beside a building	Website: Fireworks (By-law No. 2003-237) | City of Ottawa No fines are listed online due to proposed changes
Toronto, Ontario	$1,000	Additional fees may apply depending on circumstances Website: Use & Disposal of Fireworks – City of Toronto
Waterloo, Ontario	$400 initial and $800 subsequent.	Website: General Administrative Penalty Bylaw | City of Waterloo

Montreal, Quebec	Individuals: $500-$1,000 for a first offence, $1,000-$2,000 for subsequent offences Corporations: $1,000-$2,000 for a first offence, $2,000-$4,000 for subsequent offences	Website: By-law concerning the Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal
Regina, Saskatchewan	$300. Reduced to $250 if paid early. Nonpayment may result in prosecution.	Website: City of Regina- Fire Bylaw
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	$250 for a first offence. $500 for a second offence. Third and subsequent offences for an individual range from a $500 minimum to a $10,000 maximum. Third and subsequent offences for a corporation range from a $500 minimum to a $25,000 maximum.	Website: City of Saskatoon- Fire and Protection Services Bylaw

Many cities have multiple penalties depending on the circumstances of the fireworks. As an example, there may be a $250 base charge for setting off fireworks without a permit. An additional charge of $1,000 may apply in dangerous situations, such as use near a building. The summaries provided have tried to capture the varied nature of the fine structures.

The average initial fine from the cities included in the scan is $448 – Winnipeg's current initial fine is $500.

2. Specific provisions from other jurisdictions which govern the use and sale of fireworks on public and private property.

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) has conducted a jurisdictional scan of the different approaches to fireworks regulations and permits across Canada. A full copy of the jurisdictional scan is included as an appendix. Due to the volume of material and variety of approaches, the themes have been summarized below:

Fireworks only allowed on certain dates

- Fireworks permitted within specific dates and times only. Fireworks are sold leading up to the specified date and are not allowed on any other dates.

- Variations on this include allowing fireworks on specific dates with designated times.
- Date restrictions enforced through a noise bylaw.
- July 1, December 31, Victoria Day, Lunar New Year, Diwali, and Halloween.
- Cities with some variation of this include St. John's, Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, London, Barrie, Thunder Bay, Niagara Falls, Brandon, Regina, Saskatoon, and North Vancouver.

Required licensed technician to set off fireworks

- Some jurisdictions require any fireworks display to be managed by a licensed fireworks technician. Requirements for these designations differ by jurisdiction.
- Some jurisdictions only require licensed technicians outside allowable holidays.
- Jurisdictions with some variation of this include: Prince Edward Island, Fredericton, Gatineau, Thompson, Regina, Calgary, Vancouver, Richmond, Langley, Pitt Meadows, and Whiterock.

Other regulations found across Canada include:

- Complete ban on the sale of fireworks.
- Fireworks resellers require proof of permit and license to sell.
- Fines include cost of fire department attendance and/or property owners can be fined even if not responsible for setting off the fireworks. Fines range from $100 to $10,000.00.
- Fireworks allowed on private property only (if meeting certain space requirements).
- No fireworks on public property, including parks and community spaces.

In addition to the jurisdictional scan, consultations were also held with Public Works – Parks and Open Space and members from the fireworks industry.

Public Works – Parks and Open Space Division suggested consideration of a 500 m buffer of fireworks displays from dog parks.

Considerations around Fireworks

Fireworks have traditionally been used for celebrations both in professional and private settings and play an important role in many cultural celebrations. In recent years many jurisdictions have reviewed the risks and impacts of fireworks on their communities and as a result, moved to ensure regulations are in place to protect residents and the environment.

Fireworks have been linked to physical injuries, dangerous fires, and stressful impacts on residents, animals and the environment. Within Winnipeg, fireworks contribute to increased call volumes for WFPS.

Discharging fireworks without appropriate safety training or clearance of space can cause injuries to both the user and bystanders. The Canadian government tracks firework related injuries and, in the time period from April 2011 to April 2023, it reported 210 cases of injuries related to fireworks, of which 73.8 percent required medical treatment in an emergency department.[1] Of these injuries, 61 percent were burns and 19.1 percent were eye injuries – both of which can be life impacting depending on the severity.

[1] Fireworks-related injuries: data blog (Fireworks-related injuries — Canada.ca)

A study by the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal found that 129 fires and $2.5 million in damage were caused by fireworks between 2009 and 2013 in Ontario alone.[2]

In addition to the physical damage through injuries and fires, fireworks have been shown to cause stress on individuals, animals and environment. Fireworks and the noise they can cause may resemble explosions and can be triggering for individuals who have served or lived in conflict zones. Both domestic and wild animals are impacted by fireworks, with many animals panicking and abandoning young or becoming lost during fireworks events.[3] The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association in August 2025 issued a position stating fireworks pose risks to all animals exposed to them and calling for alternative measures.[4] Additionally, the impact of fireworks on the environment has been shown to cause air pollution, potential toxic chemical release in the smoke and waterway and ground pollution through debris, although long term impacts are unknown.[5]

WFPS Current Status and Fireworks Actions to Date

Firework use is governed by the City of Winnipeg Fire Prevention By-law. Firework permits are required to set off consumer fireworks within the City of Winnipeg. Permits are obtained through the WFPS Fire Prevention Branch. To be eligible for a permit, the applicant must be 18 years or older, have 100 feet of clearance from all buildings and trees and have written consent of the property owner. Most private properties in Winnipeg do not meet the clearance requirement. Fireworks may be set off as part of a City park rental when a fireworks permit is obtained in addition to the rental agreement.

Residents who set off fireworks without a permit may be fined up to $500 but this is very challenging to enforce with current Fire Prevention resources. There are currently 19 Fire Prevention Officers within WFPS that work daytime hours in accordance with the Collective Agreement provisions. Fire operations personnel could be dispatched to address fireworks concerns with the understanding that this will increase work volume and leave units unavailable for emergency response. The ability to monitor and enforce fireworks use outside of the WFPS would be beneficial for enforcing any new guidelines. Many jurisdictions do this through By-law Officers, especially the application of noise complaints.

In 2024, the WFPS undertook a direct public engagement campaign in the fall around firework awareness and safety. This included public messaging through a poster campaign, media release and social media. WFPS Public Education teams did direct outreach at community and cultural centres ahead of cultural events to talk about safety and firework requirements. Our Fire Prevention teams also visited all major firework resellers to distribute information on proper firework usage and reinforce the importance of passing this information on to consumers. This campaign was effective in decreasing the number of firework related calls, but there were still a number of fireworks violations noted and reported, including at least three videos where close calls for injuries were witnessed.

---

[2] Fireworks – The Land Between (https://www.thelandbetween.ca/living-in-the-land-between/fireworks/)
[3] "How do Fireworks Harm Wild Birds", Forbes Magazine. Published December 30, 2017
[4] The Negative Impacts of Fireworks on Animals | CVMA
[5] Fireworks Likely Caused Water Contamination at Mount Rushmore | U.S. Geological Survey

In 2025, WFPS undertook a similar public education campaign but had some scheduling conflicts due to timing. As a result, the campaign was less successful and WFPS noted an increase in fireworks calls from the previous year.

Additionally, after 2024, WFPS changed dispatch protocols on fireworks calls. As a result, crews are only dispatched to investigate if there is a risk of fire or injury. The table below lists fireworks calls received:

Year	Fireworks Calls – Dispatched	Fireworks Call – Not Dispatched	Total Fireworks Calls
2023	143	139	282
2024	153	103	256
2025	41	267	306

Public education and prevention messaging alone will not decrease the impacts of illegal fireworks. The work is resource intensive, not sustainable for every major event, and requires stronger enforcement ability for those still disregarding the requirements.

There are more fireworks complaints than permits issued for fireworks, leading to an understanding that many fireworks that generate complaints are set off illegally.

The table below lists the permits applied for and resulting approvals from 2023 to 2025:

Year	Consumer Permits Approved	Consumer Permits Rejected	Professional Permits Approved	Professional Permits Rejected
2023	36	4*	95	0
2024	40	81	95	0
2025	68	20	76	0

*Note that many of the 2023 rejected permits were lost due to software changes. WFPS suspects the number is significantly higher and more in-line with 2024.

Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) Recommendation

In 2022, the CAFC brought forward a motion calling for its members to support a ban on the sale and use of consumer fireworks within Canada. The motion states:

> 2022.3.1 Consumer fireworks are readily available across the nation for purchase and use by citizens, in many cases without any safety training, conditions, permits, or restrictions required;
>
> 2022.3.2 Consumer fireworks storage and transportation requirements for vendors are not as stringent as those for High Level Fireworks used under permits by trained and certified shooters; and that professional firework (pyrotechnic) companies exist to run events safely and effectively, contributing to the economy and community enjoyment;

2022.3.3 Consumer fireworks use continues to result in documented cases of fire and injury (of a sample of 587 fire departments across Canada, 142 or 24 percent fire departments responded to at least one call involving consumer fireworks in 2022 so far);

2022.3.4 Different levels of government each have a role in firework related legislation, that each municipality or county works hard at developing bylaws and protocols to maintain community safety and that differences in approaches across neighbouring municipalities or counties can unintentionally undermine efforts within any one region;
CAFC Recommendation

2022.3.5 That CAFC members espouse as a common approach a complete ban on the sale and use of consumer fireworks in Canada, in favour of the professional fireworks industry, and lobby the Government of Canada for the immediate implementation of such. This resolution, as passed, replaces resolutions 10.1, 10.4, 17.1.

3. Potential Options on the Control and Use of Fireworks within Winnipeg

Ban the sale and use of consumer fireworks within the City of Winnipeg

This approach would align with the CAFC as outlined above and aligns with some Canadian municipalities. As defined earlier in this report, the ban would apply to fireworks intended for recreational use by residents.

Professional fireworks displays would continue to be allowed through a permit. Permit details including date, time and location would be posted on the City of Winnipeg website in advance for awareness of upcoming displays. This restriction would apply year-round with no exceptions for holidays.

This option would require changes to the Fire Prevention Bylaw including enhanced enforcement that would allow property owners to be charged if the fireworks occurred on their property. Fines associated with violations would range from $1,000 to $5,000.

Revisions to current By-law and Improved Enforcement

Revisions to the current by-law would include firework free zones, increased fines and increased enforcement. Firework free zones could include parks and requested spaces by residents, similar to insect spraying buffer zones.

Fines associated with violations would range from $1,000 to $5,000.

Under the current By-law, “designated employee” means the Fire and Paramedic Chief of the City of Winnipeg and any employee of the City to whom he or she has delegated in writing the authority to enforce or administer all or part of the By-law in accordance with section 23(3) of the Act, or the City of Winnipeg Charter, SM 2002, c. 39.

In an effort to increase enforcement, delegation would be provided to Operational and Chief Officers working in Fire Suppression on a 24 x 7 basis, providing for greater opportunity to address violations and issue fines in a timely manner. Additionally, other enforcement options would be explored.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: Feb 02, 2026

Project Name:

Use of Fireworks on Private and Public Property

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

John Hall FCMA, CGMA
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Public Works – Parks and Open Space Division

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Recommendations align with:
Environmental Resilience 2.7 Air Quality Conservation
Good Health and Well Being 4.9 Inclusive Public Places

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Fireworks have been shown to have environmental impacts related to increase air and water pollution. The exact levels and impact current Winnipeg fireworks activities have to increasing Co2 levels or water/land pollution are not known. While eliminating fireworks would ultimately eliminate some pollutant sources, the degree of impact is unknown, therefore it is not possible to determine alignment with the Climate Action Plan.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service
Division: Community Risk Reduction
Prepared by: Lisa Gilmour, Assistant Chief Community Risk Reduction
Date: February 2, 2026

Attachment:

Appendix A: Provincial Fireworks By-laws