



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Consideration of Other Holiday and Cultural Events that Use Fireworks

Date:	April 20, 2009
To:	Licensing and Standards Committee
From:	Toronto Fire Services Fire Chief
Wards:	All wards
Reference Number:	p:\2009\ClusterB\FIR\ls0909.doc

SUMMARY

Toronto Fire Services regulates five types of fireworks vendors that provide a variety of methods to sell fireworks and make them available to citizens for Victoria Day, Canada Day and such celebrations as Diwali. While the Permanent Fireworks vendors can sell year round, all other temporary vendors can sell on the Victoria Day, Canada Day and Diwali holidays and the 7-day periods before each of these celebrations. To assist with the discharge of fireworks for cultural and special events, the fireworks by-law gives the City the ability to issue Special Occasions Discharge Permits for family fireworks. The Special Occasions Discharge Permits will enable Toronto Fire Services to account for and document fireworks that the City has authorized to be safely discharged.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting held April 23 and 24, 2007, authorized a new harmonized fireworks by-law to be effective starting January 1, 2008.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ls/bgrd/backgroundfile-2000.pdf>

City Council, at its meeting held September 26 and 27, 2007, authorized amendments to the fireworks by-law permit fees effective January 1, 2008.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ls/bgrd/backgroundfile-6408.pdf>

City Council, at its meeting held February 23, 24 and 25, 2009, authorized the amendment to the by-law to assist individuals to purchase family fireworks from vendors for Diwali celebrations in the City of Toronto only on the day of Diwali and the seven-day period before the Diwali celebration based on the cost as set out in the Fireworks by-law.

The Licensing and Standards Committee requested the Toronto Fire Chief to report to the Committee on other holiday, cultural/religious events in which consideration should be given to allow for the sale and use of fireworks.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ls/bgrd/backgroundfile-18530.pdf>

COMMENTS

Toronto Fire Services regulates five types of fireworks vendors that provide a variety of methods to sell fireworks and make them available to citizens for Victoria Day, Canada Day and such celebrations as Diwali. Fireworks are sold through the following types of vendors:

- \$2,500.00 annual fee for Permanent Fireworks Vendors - retailers that sell fireworks year round from a permanent location in the City of Toronto.
- \$1,500.00 annual fee for a Temporary Mobile Fireworks Vendor's Permit - retailers that sell Family Fireworks from an outdoor trailer or tent or other authorized location as stipulated in the Explosives Act at temporary locations.
- \$1,500.00 annual fee for a Temporary Lease Fireworks Vendor's Permit - retailers that lease any part of a retailer's store in the City of Toronto on a temporary basis solely for the purpose of selling Family Fireworks.
- \$ 500.00 annual fee for a Temporary Fireworks Vendor's Permit under 25 kg. - retailers that conduct business in the City of Toronto from a permanent location. The typical vendor is a small convenience store that sells fireworks.
- \$ 750.00 annual fee for a Temporary Fireworks Vendor's Permit over 25 kg. - retailers that conduct business in the City of Toronto from a permanent location.

While the Permanent Fireworks vendors can sell year round, all other temporary vendors can sell on the Victoria Day, Canada Day and Diwali holidays and the 7-day periods before each of these celebrations.

Family fireworks are powerful pyrotechnic devices with the potential to cause damage if misused and are also regulated under the Explosives Act. Regulating vendors of family fireworks by means of permits and other conditions in the fireworks by-law, as well as inspections by Toronto Fire Services, will help make their sale and use safer.

Special Occasions Discharge Permit to assist with Holiday and Cultural Events:

Through a Special Occasions Discharge Permit, set at a reasonable amount of \$25.00, the by-law allows for religious and cultural celebrations in our multicultural society to discharge fireworks. Toronto Fire Services receives calls from citizens who see smoke or hear explosive sounds throughout the year. With the ability to discharge family fireworks for religious and cultural events through a Special Occasions Discharge Permit for Diwali and other celebrations, Toronto Fire Services will receive more of these calls. It is important for Toronto Fire Services to be able to account for and document that the fireworks were authorized. Applicants for a Special Occasions Discharge Permit will have to submit a site plan to a Fire Prevention Officer to check for fire safety. A copy of the approved site plan and date of the event will remain in the files to allow Toronto Fire Services to respond to complaints or concerns from the public.

When there are problems at the site, Toronto Fire Services will respond to the incident and charges could be laid under the Fireworks by-law. Toronto Fire Services can also notify the appropriate authorities if the requirements of the Explosives Act are not followed.

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SIGNATURE



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