

Attachment 1

Summary of Findings: Fireworks Bylaw Review Online Public Survey

Background:

As part of the review of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 466, Fireworks, the city hosted an online survey to gather input and better understand opinions of members of the public. The survey was available from February 19 to March 5, 2021. The survey was advertised on relevant City of Toronto webpages and social media channels, as well as through targeted stakeholder emails.

The online survey did not have the scientific controls that a third-party public opinion survey would. As such, the results should not be considered representative of all Toronto residents, but rather used to provide additional insight to the review.

Respondents:

Over 6400 individuals responded to the survey. Survey respondents were asked to self-identify as either a Toronto resident, fireworks vendor, fireworks industry member, member of an advocacy group, ratepayer/residents' association or a not-for-profit organization, or other. The vast majority of respondents identified as Toronto residents (92%), with fireworks vendors and industry members making up another 2% of respondents. An additional 1% of respondents identified as part of an advocacy group, ratepayer/residents' association or a not-for-profit organization. Approximately 5% of respondents did not self-identify within a group.

Summary of Findings:

Fireworks Participation

When asked to select all the ways in which they had participated in the use of fireworks over the last 5 years, 60% of respondents indicated that they had viewed community, city-run, or professional firework displays, with a similar number (53%) indicating that they had viewed fireworks set off by other people in their neighbourhood. Approximately 13% of respondents had used fireworks on their own property, 13% had used fireworks on public property (including beaches and parks), and 12% had used fireworks on another person's private property. There were an additional 17% of respondents who had not participated in the use of fireworks at all.

Fireworks Safety

When respondents were asked how familiar they are with how to use fireworks safety, 38% indicated they were familiar, 12% were somewhat familiar, 10% were not familiar with safe firework use, and 39% selected not applicable.

Knowledge of Toronto's Fireworks Rules

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their knowledge of the Toronto's current rules around fireworks use and sale. The results are summarized below.

1. Prior to completing this survey, were you familiar with Toronto's rules about when fireworks can be used in the City?

- Yes: 34%

- No: 40%
- Somewhat: 26%

2. Prior to completing this survey, were you familiar with Toronto's rules about where in the City fireworks can be used?

- Yes: 28%
- No: 45%
- Somewhat: 26%

3. Prior to completing this survey, were you familiar with Toronto's rules about when a permit is needed to use fireworks?

- Yes: 25%
- No: 57%
- Somewhat: 18%

4. Prior to completing this survey, were you familiar with Toronto's Rules about the sale of Fireworks?

- Yes: 23%
- No: 57%
- Somewhat: 20%

5. Prior to completing this survey, were you aware of how to obtain a permit to use fireworks when one is required?

- Yes: 14%
- No: 74%
- Somewhat: 12%

6. Do you know where to access information about Toronto's fireworks rules?

- Yes: 35%
- No: 40%
- Somewhat: 25%

Topics of Concern Related to Fireworks

Respondents were provided with a list of topics and pre-identified concerns related to fireworks developed through staff research. Respondents were asked to rank their level of concern, if any, for each of the topics provided. Respondents were also provided with an option to indicate if they were not concerned about the provided topics.

Staff calculated the average respondent ranking for each topic. The list below shows the topics that respondents were most concerned about to the least.

1. Impacts of fireworks use on pets and wildlife
2. Environmental impacts of fireworks use, including litter
3. Loud noise caused by firework use
4. Potential for fireworks to cause a fire and/or injuries
5. Individuals using fireworks not following the rules
6. Fireworks use occurring late at night/early morning is a nuisance

7. Timely enforcement of fireworks use that doesn't follow Toronto's rules
8. Toronto's rule about the use of fireworks are not effective
9. Individuals selling fireworks not following the rules
10. Toronto's rules about the sale of fireworks not effective.

11% of respondents indicated they were not concerned about any of the topics.

Qualitative Feedback

Respondents were provided the opportunity to provide general comments about fireworks in Toronto. Approximately 3,000 comments were provided. Staff reviewed the comments and flagged common themes during analysis.

Some comments further described respondent's fireworks related concerns:

- 28% of comments included concerns about the impact of fireworks on wildlife and pets, including unpredictable timing and ongoing fireworks use throughout the warm weather season.
- 9% of comments raised issues related to the environmental impacts of fireworks, including litter and the smoke.
- 5% of comments raised safety concerns, including injury and potential fire risk.

There were also a number of suggestions made to address fireworks related concerns:

- 19% of comments referenced increased enforcement efforts to deal with illegal fireworks discharge.
- 14% referenced the need for increased education. Many respondents indicated that they were not aware of the rules, or in some instances, that the city even had rules around fireworks use.
- Approximately 15% of comments referenced banning fireworks in Toronto, while another 13% indicated that current rules are adequate and should not be changed.
- A small number of comments included suggestions for loosening existing fireworks regulations (3%).