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**Bexar County Fire Marshal Reports New Year's Celebrations
Included Emergencies They Warned About**

Emergency calls during New Year's Eve and the early morning hours of New Year's Day 2023 kept fire fighters and emergency medical services in unincorporated Bexar County and the 26 suburban cities on their toes.

Each year, the Bexar County Fire Marshal issues tips and recommendations for the safe handling of fireworks prior to the events. The following provides an overview of fireworks-related responses by Fire Marshal's Office personnel or Emergency Services District's first responders.

For the 48-hour period between early December 31, 2022 and midnight of January 1, 2023 Bexar County Fire Dispatch answered 1,610 emergency/9-1-1 calls and 1,360 calls that came through the non-emergency line or fireworks hotline. Those calls resulted in 87 documented, fireworks-related incidents.

Notable incidents:

- On Saturday, December 31, 2022, Bexar County Fire Marshal Investigators learned about a medical burn in the 9800 block of South WW White Road. Emergency medical responders reported a minor patient had suffered an accidental burn injury. The patient accidentally ran into a metal fire pit filled with wood burning inside. The patient received medical services at the scene and was later transported to a local hospital. The minor suffered 2nd degree burns to a leg.
- On Sunday, January 01, 2023, Bexar County Emergency Services District 2 responded to a reported eye injury in the 9800 block of Sunset Place. It turned out the 20-year-old patient had been lighting firework, and it ended up striking him in the eye. The patient suffered a laceration underneath the eye and was transported to a local hospital for further evaluation.
- On January 1, 2023, Bexar County Fire Marshal Investigators responded to a structure fire in the 6800 block of Cape Meadow Drive. Converse Fire Department personnel advised that there was damage to an exterior wall of the residence. The investigation revealed a v-shaped fire pattern and the melted remnants of a trash bin. Within the melted trashcan used fireworks were found. The trash bin actually belonged to a neighbor of the affected residence. The neighbor stated that their family had shot off fireworks and disposed of them in the trash bin. Fortunately, the damage was limited to approximately \$5,000.



- Emergency Services District 2 responded to a call of a fireworks-related injury. A 26-year old had injuries from debris to the forehead. The patient also suffered a serious injury to their hands from a mortar round that exploded as the tube was placed on the ground.

Besides the emergency response coordination, the Fire Marshal's Office also conducted inspections of vendors and their various sites.

Summary:

- 211 total sites were inspected.
- On December 30, 2022, Bexar County Fire Marshal's Inspectors issued two violations to an individual at Culebra and Westwood Loop for selling fireworks without obtaining proper permits and for not selling in a stand or an approved manor.
- On December 31, 2022, two citations were issued to a stand operator. The permits were revoked and the stand was shut down. The stand operator on Talley Road was observed by Deputy Fire Marshal igniting fireworks within about 5 feet of the stand. In addition, open, cold alcoholic beverages were found inside the stand. Citations were issued for:
 - TOC 2154.251 (3) - Prohibited use of fireworks- igniting fireworks within 100ft of a place where fireworks are stored or sold
 - TAC TITLE 28 part 1 CHAPTER 34.817 (H) The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages in any retail fireworks site is prohibited. No retail sales personnel inside the facility or any supervisor may be under the influence of or consume alcoholic beverages while on duty.

These incidents are a stark reminder that handling of fireworks is inherently dangerous. The Fire Marshal reminds all who intend to handle fireworks to use them in a safe and responsible manner.

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