

City of Mississauga
Corporate Report



<p>Date: September 17, 2025</p> <p>To: Chair and Members of General Committee</p>	<p>Originator's files:</p>
<p>From: Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Community Services</p>	<p>Meeting date: October 1, 2025</p>

Subject

2025 Fireworks By-law Review – Updated Report

Recommendation

1. That General Committee approve a full prohibition on the sale, distribution, possession, and use of consumer fireworks in Mississauga, as outlined in the corporate report from the Commissioner of Community Services, dated September 17, 2025, entitled “2025 Fireworks By-law Review – Updated Report”.
2. That the housekeeping amendments to the Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law 0182-2023, as outlined in the corporate report from the Commissioner of Community Services, dated September 17, 2025, entitled “2025 Fireworks By-law Review – Updated Report”, be approved.
3. That the Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law 0182-2023 and any other by-laws that pertain to the sale, use and effects of fireworks, be amended in accordance with the option approved by Council.
4. That all necessary by-laws be enacted.

Executive Summary

- In May 2025, staff presented the Fireworks By-law Review corporate report in response to Council’s direction to address growing public safety concerns, complaints, and enforcement challenges related to fireworks use.
- This report builds on that work, with consideration given to feedback from more than 3,500 survey contributors, consultations, and a jurisdictional scan of comparable municipalities.
- Two regulatory approaches were explored by staff for Council’s consideration:
 - Option 1 (Recommended): A full ban on the sale, distribution, possession, and use of consumer fireworks in Mississauga
 - Option 2: Tighter rules on hours, sales, and products while maintaining

limited consumer use.

- Staff recommend Option 1 as the most effective and sustainable solution to improve public safety, enable more effective and consistent enforcement, and support long-term behaviour change toward safer ways to celebrate.
- Staff further recommend expanding the use of Part I charges and, in future, introducing administrative penalties to strengthen enforcement capabilities.
- Proposed by-law amendments include revised definitions, new provisions for pyrotechnics and pyrotechnic effect simulation equipment or devices, and other housekeeping amendments to improve clarity and safety.
- Operational actions include enhanced enforcement in partnership with Peel Regional Police and Mississauga Fire and Emergency Services, focusing on high-priority areas and increasing visible presence.
- A city-wide public education campaign, with culturally aware outreach, to be enacted to effectively inform residents and vendors about the regulations, penalties, and safe practices.

Background

On May 21, 2025, staff presented the corporate report “[2025 Fireworks By-law Review](#)” (referred to as the “May 2025 Fireworks Report”), prepared in response to Council’s November 2024 direction to review the Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law 0182-2023 (the Fireworks By-law). The May 2025 Fireworks Report (see Appendix 1) provided a comprehensive overview of fireworks use in Mississauga, outlining enforcement challenges, environmental impacts, and public safety concerns. It included detailed complaint and enforcement data, results from a public survey with more than 3,500 contributors, stakeholder feedback, and a jurisdictional scan of comparable municipalities. Together, these findings were intended to inform potential updates to strengthen Mississauga’s fireworks regulatory framework.

Options

This report builds on the foundation of the May 2025 Fireworks Report, incorporating updated information based on additional consultation, research, and staff analysis. It recommends a full prohibition on the sale, distribution, possession, and use of consumer fireworks in Mississauga as the most effective means of improving public safety and enabling more effective and consistent enforcement. It also presents an alternative option that would introduce additional restrictions to the current regulatory framework should Council choose not to proceed with a prohibition.

Options Regarding the Sale and Use of Fireworks

Option 1 - Full Prohibition (Recommended)

This option proposes amending the Fireworks By-law to implement a full ban on the sale, distribution, possession, and use of consumer fireworks within Mississauga. This is the

recommended approach because restrictions on specific days and times have proven extremely difficult to enforce given the fleeting nature of fireworks use. A prohibition creates a single, clear rule, eliminates ambiguity, and allows the City to work toward long-term compliance while ultimately reducing enforcement costs and demands.

To align with practices in neighbouring municipalities such as Brampton, novelty devices classified as type F.5, specifically sparklers and toy pistol caps, would remain permitted. If adopted, the Fireworks Licensing and Use By-law may be renamed to the Fireworks By-law to reflect its revised scope.

Under this approach, all fireworks permit applications would be reviewed by Mississauga Fire and Emergency Services (MFES) and approved only for professional displays associated with community events, film productions, or significant occasions hosted by recognized organizations. No permits would be issued for individual consumer use.

Regional Alignment and Risk Reduction

Surrounding municipalities including Brampton, Caledon, and Milton have already implemented consumer fireworks bans, and others are reviewing their by-laws in response to public concern. Mississauga risks becoming an outlier if it does not act. Remaining one of the few municipalities in the area without a ban could unintentionally encourage greater fireworks use in Mississauga, resulting in additional enforcement pressures, increased safety risks, and avoidable neighbourhood disturbances.

As such, a prohibition aligns Mississauga with regional direction, presents a clear public safety message, and prevents the City from carrying a disproportionate share of fireworks-related incidents, complaints, and enforcement costs.

Benefits of Full Prohibition

- **Creates a Single, Clear Rule** – Removes confusion about dates, times, and product types, making it easier for residents to comply and officers to enforce.
- **Enhances Public Safety** – Reduces risk of fires, injuries, and property damage caused by misuse.
- **Improves Community Well-Being** – Minimizes noise disruptions, stress on pets and wildlife, and impacts to vulnerable residents.
- **Decreases Enforcement and Emergency Costs Over Time** – As compliance becomes the norm, fewer service calls will be required, freeing resources for other priorities.
- **Supports Long-Term Behaviour Change** – Eliminates casual or impulsive use, encouraging safer and more sustainable celebratory practices.

Driving Behaviour Change

Consumer fireworks use can be impulsive or uninformed, relying on individuals to interpret and follow safety instructions correctly. A prohibition removes that risk, preventing unsafe or

inconsiderate use before it occurs. Like smoking bans and distracted driving laws, a full prohibition is expected to shift behaviour over time, normalizing alternative celebratory practices such as City-sanctioned professional displays and reducing negative impacts across the community.

Enforcement Perspective

A prohibition provides enforcement officers with a single, unambiguous rule: any sale, possession, or use of consumer fireworks is a violation. This clarity enables rapid, consistent response and significantly reduces the investigative burden currently required to verify dates, times, and types of fireworks. Over time, as voluntary compliance improves, service requests are expected to decrease, further reducing enforcement costs and pressure on staff resources.

Option 2: Implement Additional Restrictions

This option proposes strengthening regulations while continuing to allow the sale and use of consumer fireworks on five currently permitted holidays: Lunar New Year, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Diwali, and New Year's Eve (NYE). The goal is to reduce the frequency, duration, and intensity of fireworks-related disruptions while maintaining limited opportunities for celebration.

Proposed Enhancements

Under this approach, the following additional restrictions would be introduced:

- **Further Constraining Hours of Use on Permitted Holidays**
 - Limit fireworks use to 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (reduced from dusk to 11:00 p.m.) on four of the five permitted holidays.
 - Allow use from 11:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on NYE only, allowing fireworks use during midnight celebrations while minimizing prolonged disruption.
- **Tightening the Sales Period**
 - Permit sales only during the 10 calendar days preceding each holiday to curb impulse buying.
 - Prohibit sales on the holiday itself to discourage last-minute purchases.
- **Prohibiting Specific Firework Types**
 - Ban Roman Candles entirely, whether sold individually or in multi-packs, due to their high risk of misuse and injury.
- **Requiring a Vendor Registry**
 - Mandate licensed vendors to maintain and submit a registry of fireworks inventory and sales.
 - Use this data to identify high-volume or high-risk areas, inform future regulations, and target enforcement and public education efforts.

Benefits and Limitations

This option is expected to reduce some complaints and safety incidents by narrowing hours, restricting sales windows, and removing higher-risk products from circulation. It also provides the City with valuable sales data to support evidence-based enforcement and policy decisions.

However, introducing additional regulations also increases the complexity of the rules that residents must understand and follow. Current experience shows that compliance with existing regulations is inconsistent, with many complaints related to fireworks use outside of permitted times or in prohibited locations. Adding more rules may have limited impact if voluntary compliance does not improve and may increase the demand on enforcement resources to monitor, investigate, and educate the public.

Compared to a full prohibition, this approach is less likely to produce long-term behaviour change or provide the same level of clarity and predictability for residents and enforcement officers.

Permit Process

As with Option 1, fireworks permits would be issued exclusively for professional displays associated with community events, film productions, or significant occasions hosted by recognized organizations. No permits would be granted for individual consumer use.

Implementation Timeline

For both options, staff recommend that by-law amendments take effect on January 2, 2026. This timeline allows the City to conduct a comprehensive public education campaign, notify vendors, and support a smooth transition. Licensed vendors would have sufficient time to phase out existing inventory and adapt business practices.

Additional By-law Amendments and Actions for All Options

Enhanced Enforcement and Public Education

Regardless of the option selected, the City will continue to use both proactive and reactive measures to enforce the Fireworks By-law and associated regulations. Enforcement will adapt its deployment strategies to focus on areas of highest concern, using a combination of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEOs) and MFES officers, and in collaboration with Peel Regional Police (PRP). This coordinated approach is intended to maximize visibility, deter violations, and improve the likelihood of educating the public, while apprehending violators, and issuing fines or charges where warranted.

Enforcement alone cannot fully address the root causes of non-compliance or change public behaviour. Education is essential to shifting attitudes and reducing reliance on punitive enforcement over time. Enforcement and MFES will, therefore, implement a comprehensive public outreach campaign targeting residents and fireworks vendors. Using a combination of digital, print, voice, and in-person communication channels, the campaign will raise awareness of the City's Fireworks By-law, explain the impacts of fireworks use on the community, and outline the penalties for violations.

This campaign will include culturally aware communications, engagement and outreach activities known to strengthen local relationships and foster community-led solutions. The City may partner with local organizations, cultural associations, and community leaders to co-create messaging and materials to promote safe alternatives and encourage community education and safety, while leveraging trusted voices within the community. The objective is to shift social norms around fireworks use, foster shared responsibility for public safety, and build a more sustainable culture of voluntary compliance.

Increasing Fines and Penalties

Current fines and penalties under the Fireworks By-law are not consistently acting as effective deterrents. Higher evidentiary requirements and lengthy legal processes reduce the City's ability to address violations quickly and consistently. Staff recommend increasing existing fines and introducing administrative penalties and new Part I charges, specifically for fireworks-related violations. These changes will improve consistency, enable more efficient and effective enforcement and create stronger financial consequences for non-compliance.

Administrative penalties may be phased in after initial by-law amendments, allowing time to build capacity and ensure effective implementation.

Housekeeping Amendments

Several housekeeping amendments are recommended to modernize the Fireworks By-law, improve clarity, and strengthen safety measures. These include:

- **Defining and Regulating Special Effect Pyrotechnics and Pyrotechnic Effect Simulation Equipment or Devices** – Ensure these are subject to appropriate safety standards.
- **Clarifying Public vs. Private Displays** – Provide clear definitions based on property ownership, intended audience, and spectator numbers.
- **Defining Novelty Devices** – Introduce a definition for sparklers and toy pistol caps, which may be permitted even under a full prohibition.
- **Restricting Use by Location** – Specify that fireworks can only be used on property owned by the user or with written permission from the owner.
- **Strengthening Permit Conditions** – Require stricter adherence to the dates and times authorized on issued permits.

These amendments will help ensure greater compliance, improve safety outcomes, and provide clarity for residents, vendors, and enforcement staff.

Use of City Property for Sponsored Fireworks Displays

The City may make designated public property, such as Celebration Square, available for hosting permitted fireworks displays, sponsored by local businesses, organizations, or community groups. These events would require a permit from MFES and compliance with all safety requirements and operational guidelines. This approach provides an opportunity for

residents to celebrate in a safe, controlled, and inclusive environment, while supporting community partnerships and reducing the risks associated with individual consumer use.

Financial Impact

Regardless of which option Council selects to address fireworks, there will be associated financial implications. Enforcement efforts depend primarily on MLEOs, with additional support from PRP and MFES during peak periods and operational blitzes.

Based on 2025 actuals and projected costs, the estimated cost to Enforcement for 2026 is approximately \$285,000. This figure reflects a planned expansion of enforcement activities, including additional overtime, PRP paid duty, operational planning, and a projected annual inflation rate of 3 percent.

To support compliance and reduce the risks associated with fireworks use, a comprehensive two-pronged public education strategy has been developed, with a combined estimated cost of up to \$300,000. This includes a coordinated effort across multiple teams to deliver consistent messaging about fireworks, as well as seasonal operational campaigns targeting specific holidays. Throughout, the City will use culturally aware tactics, including collaboration with community associations and local leaders, to better educate Mississauga's diverse communities and encourage voluntary compliance.

Enforcement and public communications tactics will be scalable to the extent possible and managed within existing budgets for 2026. While this approach ensures fiscal responsibility, it may limit the Division's ability to fully scale enforcement and education efforts to their maximum potential during this period. Staff will make every effort to deliver the strongest possible program within available resources and will continue to monitor outcomes. If additional resources are determined to be necessary after implementation, Enforcement may return during the 2027 budget process with a request for enhanced funding.

Staff anticipate that under Option 1 (Full Prohibition), as public expectations adjust and compliance improves over time, the demand on enforcement resources will decline. MLEOs could then be redeployed to address other priority issues. Similarly, the City's reliance on intensive public education campaigns is expected to decrease as fireworks-related behaviour changes and compliance becomes normalized.

Conclusion


As directed by Council, staff reviewed the Fireworks By-law to address increasing complaints, safety concerns, and enforcement challenges. This report builds on the May 2025 Fireworks Report and recommends a full prohibition on the sale, distribution, possession, and use of consumer fireworks in Mississauga.

A full prohibition is the most effective and sustainable solution to improve public safety, enable more effective and consistent enforcement, and align Mississauga with neighbouring municipalities. This approach will prevent the City from becoming a regional hub for fireworks, provide residents with a single clear rule that is easy to understand, and is expected to reduce safety risks, enforcement pressures, and long-term costs while encouraging safer, alternative ways to celebrate.

To support the success of this approach, staff intend to enhance enforcement capacity, expand public education (including culturally aware outreach), increase fines and penalties, and modernize the Fireworks By-law through housekeeping amendments, if approved by Council.

Attachments

Appendix 1: 2025 Fireworks By-law Review Corporate Report



Raj Sheth, P.Eng, Commissioner of Community Services

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