

Home fireworks, open burning banned statewide

Written by Darci Tomky

Gov. John Hickenlooper recently signed an executive order that bans open burning and private use of fireworks throughout Colorado because of the very dry conditions and high fire danger.

Many residents are wondering how this applies to their summer barbecues and Fourth of July celebrations.

According to an article by Colorado Municipal League staff attorney Rachel Allen, commercial, professional and municipal fireworks displays are allowed when written approval has been granted by the sheriff of the county in which the fireworks display is to occur.

Willy Morse, fireworks organizer for Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department, said they hope to continue with the firework show on July 4 as planned. He noted the fire department crew is always on hand to handle any problems that might occur.

Under normal circumstances, most fireworks that explode or leave the ground are illegal to possess or discharge under state law, with an exemption for public or professional fireworks displays. Now, the statewide order bans all private use of fireworks.

“That means everything,” said city superintendent Mark Brown. Under his interpretation, all fireworks, including sparklers and other small fireworks, have been banned.

Allen said the governor’s ban on the use of fireworks does not extend to the possession of fireworks that would be otherwise permissible. However, anyone using those fireworks during this temporary ban would likely be charged with a class 3 misdemeanor.

As far as the fire ban is concerned, Allen said the ban does not apply to campfires in constructed, permanent fire pits or fire grates within developed camp and picnic grounds or recreation sites; liquid-fueled or gas-fueled stoves; fireplaces contained within buildings; charcoal grills at private residences; or specific prescribed or controlled burns for agricultural or irrigation purposes.

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