



**A Review of
Fireworks Bylaw Chapter 739
FIREWORKS AND FIRECRACKERS
April 2025
for
Kitchener, ON, council**

A Review and Recommendations on City of Kitchener Fireworks Bylaw Chapter 739

Introduction

The Canadian National Fireworks Association (CNFA) is committed to ensuring consumer fireworks and novelty devices remain safe, legal, and enjoyable for communities. Federally, Canada's Explosives Regulations (ER), 2013 already provide comprehensive safety standards, and municipalities can confidently align their bylaws accordingly.

We recommend that city staff preparing staff reports or fireworks bylaws get the following from the federal regulations: Part 16 Consumer Fireworks and Novelty Devices, Part 17 Special Effect Pyrotechnics and Part 18 Display Fireworks.

Why Bylaws Matter

Bylaws help communities clearly define safe and responsible fireworks usage, reinforcing federal regulations without unnecessary and unenforceable restrictions. Education, clear guidelines, and effective enforcement—not outright bans—are key to addressing safety concerns and promoting enjoyment for all residents.

Key Recommendations for Updating Kitchener's Bylaw

CNFA compliments the City of Kitchener on its current bylaw, however, some events have happened since it was passed by council, namely, an amendment to ER, 2013. In addition, all three levels of government may have requirements for the sale and use of fireworks. In case of conflict it is the strictest requirement that applies.

1. Consumer and Novelty Device Use and Sale:

In the last amendment to ER, 2013, Part 16 was renamed Consumer Fireworks and Novelty Devices. Novelty devices are lower risk than consumer fireworks so they may be bought and used by persons 16+.

Persons under the age of 18 may use fireworks if they are under the supervision of someone 18 or older.

2. Clarify Firecracker Regulations:

- Clearly define and regulate firecrackers (F.2) according to federal permissions. Cultural and special effects uses should remain permitted where federally allowed. For special rules refer [here](#). Firecrackers have never been banned by the federal regulator, however, you should be aware that permissions to use are required from both the local fire authority and the federal regulator.
- A [2023 City of Kitchener Staff Report](#) clearly stated: *"Staff do not recommend banning the sales of fireworks as they are broadly available for sale throughout the year in*

neighbouring communities”. The report further asserted: “Staff do not have enough staff resources to meaningfully enforce an outright ban”.

3. Expand Celebration Dates:

- We have noted a recent newspaper article mentioning how the City worked to allow the use of fireworks at a wedding. This is a positive for the reputation for the City and may result in economic benefits.
- Recognize and include celebrations like Lunar New Year to reflect community diversity and evolving traditions.

4. Spectator Safety:

- Clearly state that safety guidelines on fireworks labels must be followed unless a bylaw requires stricter rules. For instance, if an aerial consumer firework reaches 40m height, spectators should maintain at least 80m distance.

Additional Suggestions:

- Clearly differentiate sky lanterns and model rocket motors from fireworks and regulate them separately if necessary. Flame effects are not fireworks but if used with fireworks are subject to the Special Effect Pyrotechnics manual.
- Emphasize proper retail practices, such as restricting loose fireworks from direct consumer access.
- We recommend that staff preparing position papers or fireworks bylaws download the following from the federal regulations: Part 16 Consumer Fireworks and Novelty Devices, Part 17 Special Effect Pyrotechnics and Part 18 Display Fireworks.

CNFA's Role and Resources:

- CNFA offers valuable resources like vendor and user safety training, educational materials, and community engagement programs such as [Be a Good Neighbour](#) and has also led its own [Vendor Certification Training Course](#) as well as a separate [Employee Training Program](#), all available for communities to build into their own bylaws, at no cost.
- Regularly updated technical communiques ensure municipalities stay informed about evolving safety standards and best practices.

- CNFA has authored several research papers including [Fireworks Prohibitions](#), [Environment & Animals](#), [Silent Fireworks](#), [Health Impacts](#), [Cultural Communities & Fireworks](#). [Drones as an Alternative to Fireworks](#)

Final Thoughts

The City of Kitchener can enhance community safety and enjoyment by modernizing its fireworks bylaw to align with current federal standards and community values. Thoughtful updates and proactive education will ensure fireworks remain a cherished tradition, safely enjoyed by all.

Together, we create safer, inclusive, and memorable celebrations. The answer to misuse (anti-social behaviour) is education and enforcement – not banning.

FOR MORE INFO & TO SCHEDULE A BRIEFING:

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