

June 2, 2005

Honorable Mayor and Members of
The Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular meeting of
June 14, 2005

DEPLOYMENT OF POLICE AND FIRE PERSONNEL FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY HOLIDAY

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council:

1. Receive and file this report

BACKGROUND

The 4th of July continues to be a very popular holiday for Hermosa Beach. Thousands of people come from out of town to party in Hermosa. The fireworks show in Redondo Beach serves as an added attraction as many people come to Hermosa to watch the show from the beach. Traditionally, the police department encounters large crowds at neighborhood parties especially along the Strand. The most active part of the day begins around 3:00 PM and continues till midnight. The largest concentrations of people are found along the Strand to Hermosa Avenue running the full length of the City. Officers are running from call to call and officers initiate a number of subject stops issuing citations and making arrests primarily for public intoxication and fighting.

Last year July 4th fell on a Sunday. Officers handled 331 calls for service on the 4th last year (there were 671 calls for service for the entire weekend). There were 45 total arrests for the weekend with 16 arrests on the 4th. Officers issued 181 citations for the entire holiday weekend.

Since July 4th, 2001 the police department has deployed all available officers to work in uniform on the 4th. This includes detectives and the command staff (including myself). Additionally, the police department has enlisted the services of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on the July 4th holiday. A request has been made already for a total of 12 deputy sheriffs to augment existing staff. The strategy has been and continues to be the visible presence of a large uniformed force on the July 4th holiday. The strategy is two fold. First, it is our desire that law abiding citizens see the large number of officers and feel safe as a result of that presence. Second, it is our hope that rowdy and disruptive individuals seeing the large number of officers might think twice about causing problems or even staying in Hermosa Beach.

Many officers are deployed along the Strand and the Plaza to monitor activities while other officers are assigned in squads as rapid deployment groups. If a problem develops, the tactic is to flood the area with officers, stop the problem and make arrests as necessary. This flooding of officers into an area has a real calming effect upon the crowd and dissipates tensions from escalating further.

The police department also monitors the traditional "Ironman" event usually held in the northern part of the City around 11:00-12:00PM in the morning. Last year's Ironman went very smoothly and required no police intervention. Our officers along with officers from the Manhattan Beach and El Segundo Police Departments monitored the event. The drinking portion of the event took place on private property (2634 The Strand) and the organizers promptly cleaned up after the event was over.

It was noted last year that there were fewer alcohol violations on the Strand and in the Downtown area than in years past. Efforts were made to step up enforcement of alcohol violations on the Beach and Strand in the weeks prior to the July 4th holiday. An electronic message board was also set up on the plaza advertising the tripling of fines associated with alcohol use. The police department is already deploying a weekend beach patrol to step up enforcement of alcohol violations and to monitor speed violations on the Strand. The message board will be deployed once again. Large floodlights are also set up in the downtown area and are activated at the conclusion of the fireworks show in Redondo Beach. The lights keep most of the Plaza illuminated assisting with our efforts to monitor activities on the Plaza.

This will be the fifth year that the police department has deployed large numbers of officers on the July 4th holiday. It has been our hope that this practice has slowly modified the behavior of the crowds for the better.

The fire department will hire additional personnel to fully staff Engine 12 enabling July 4th response to be two fully staffed paramedic fire engines, one paramedic Advanced Life Support ambulance, and one Basic Life Support ambulance. In addition two additional Reserve Firefighters will be on duty and assigned as needed.

McCormick's Ambulance has again agreed to supply one Basic Life Support ambulance on "standby" in the city for the day. Two fire department arson investigators will be assigned to conduct field operations from 2 PM till 2 AM specifically targeting illegal firework activity. If necessary the fire department will receive assistance through automatic aid agreements with Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach Fire Departments.

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

MICHAEL LAVIN, CHIEF OF POLICE
HERMOSA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

STEPHEN BURRELL
CITY MANAGER

RUSSELL TINGLEY, FIRE CHIEF
HERMOSA BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT