

Documented Impacts of Fireworks in Whatcom County

This is just some relevant data/information to be supported with expert and citizen testimonials.

Fire

- There were **68 Fire Calls** in Whatcom County in 2025 over the holiday, 45 on July 4th — a **444% increase over typical levels** for a similar time span (10-15). (a)
- There were **271 fires from fireworks** in the state in 2024 and ~\$2.5 million in property loss. (b)
- The Lummi Tribe banned fireworks in 2025 at the Stommish Grounds (c) and Lummi law explicitly prohibits fireworks ignition during burn bans (d); a Stage 3 burn ban in Whatcom County does not prohibit lighting fireworks. (e)

Animal Welfare

- Increased call volume and **56 stray domestic animals** received July 2-8 (37 stray domestic animals received Aug 2-8 by comparison) (f)

Wildlife

- **66 wild animals** received July 2-8 and an even higher number the following week, including 6 stranded marine mammals received (**seal pups orphaned** on beaches). (g)

Environmental

- **Thousands of pounds of fireworks debris** are left on Whatcom County shorelines each year, washing into the Salish Sea. (h)
- A Wash. county-authored public environmental notice **explicitly links fireworks to waterway contamination**. (i)
- Water sampling in Lake Stevens, Wash., after fireworks, showed a **spike in perchlorate levels harmful to aquatic life**. (j)

Safety

- At least **7 fireworks-related emergency room visits** over the 2024 July 4th holiday were treated at Peace Health St. Joseph Medical Center in Bellingham. (k)
- A **community ban reduces the risk of firework-related ocular trauma**, according to a Univ. of Wash study. (l)

Mental Health

~**852 Veterans with PTSD** reside in Whatcom County, based on census data (12,529) (m) and national victimization rates (7%) (n)

There are other impact areas for which local statistics aren't possible (or difficult to obtain), but can be illuminated through citizen testimonials:

- Farm animal welfare (e.g., horses)
- Insurance availability/rates
- Noise
- Air pollution
- Domestic animal stress/anxiety
- Litter
- Wildlife disturbance
- Emergency transportation egress

Source

(a) "Updated numbers from Fourth of July weekend fires, arrests and more," My Bellingham [Now](#)

(b) "Fire in Washington 2024," Washington State Fire Marshal's [Office](#)

(c) Bellingham Metro [News](#)

(d) Lummi Nation Code of Laws: Title 19 Fireworks [Code](#); (e) Whatcom County Fire Burn Ban [Stages](#)

(f) What County Humane Society Exec. Director supplied data

(g) What County Humane Society Exec. Director supplied data

(h) "July Fourth fireworks leave environmental mess for Whatcom shoreline residents," [CDN](#), July 2, 2024

(i) Clark County Public Works [Warning](#)

(j) Lake Stevens City Council July 15, 2025, Special Meeting [Minutes](#)

(k) AOL [news](#)

(l) "Ocular Trauma and Fireworks Bans: Seattle, Washington Case-Control Study," Univ. of Wash.; HCP [Live](#)

(m) US Census Bureau American Community [Survey](#) (n) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Center for [PTSD](#)