

# **Operation Moonbeam – police keeping a close eye this Bonfire Night**

**Local policing divisions will be supported by national resources to help keep communities safe over the Bonfire Night period. This repeats what has happened previously, but Police Scotland is now supported by new legislation making it an offence for anyone to buy fireworks for someone under the age of 18.**

As part of Operation Moonbeam, which was first introduced in 2018, Local Area Commanders throughout Scotland can supplement their own local policing teams with specialist Public Order Officers, should they be required.

Operation Moonbeam is Police Scotland's public order operation set up after significant disorder and antisocial behaviour in 2017, which included targeted attacks on the blue light services responding to emergency calls.

Since it was launched, the number of fireworks-related offences taking place across the country has reduced, including a significant fall in 2020, when Covid-19 restrictions prevented large-scale gathering and postponed all public events.

In 2021 there was a further reduction. On Thursday, 4 November, and Friday, 5 November, 2021, 649 calls were received by police in relation to fireworks, and a further 105 regarding fires. In 2020 these figures were 798 and 153, respectively.

## **From Monday, 10 October, 2022 it is an offence under the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act to buy or attempt to buy fireworks for anyone under the age of 18.**

This type of offence is known as proxy purchase or proxy supply, and there are already similar offences in relation to adults supplying products such as alcohol and tobacco to children.

Anyone in breach of the Act will be subject to a fine of **£5,000, a six-month prison term, or both.**

An aggravator for attacks on emergency service workers will also be introduced on 10 October.

Assistant Chief Constable Tim Mairs, Gold Commander for Operation Moonbeam said: “It has already been an incredibly busy year for policing in Scotland and we are now preparing for one of our most demanding and challenging periods over the Bonfire Night weekend.

“Regardless of the pressures we have faced, planning for this time has not been hindered and we have a tried and tested deployment plan in place to support local divisions with all of the specialist resources they may require.

“A range of highly-trained Public Order Officers will be available to policing commanders across Scotland to enhance

their resources and deal with any issues that arise, as well as to reassure communities that we remain committed to keeping them safe over Bonfire Night.

“We have been engaging with schools over the past few weeks to highlight the risks and consequences associated with the antisocial and criminal use of fireworks, and would ask parents and guardians of young people to do the same and help us keep communities safe.

“The introduction of the proxy-purchasing offence helps us limit the access young people have to fireworks and gives us more powers of enforcement for those who choose not to obey the law. Please do not risk the prospect of a fine, imprisonment, or both.

“The new aggravator for attacks on emergency service workers is a welcome addition to existing legislation and ensures those responsible receive the severest punishments for their action. The Chief Constable has repeatedly stated that violence and abuse are not part of the job of a police officer and we will treat any such attacks with the utmost seriousness.”



Better to attend an organised event on Bonfire Night.  
Edinburgh Castle Fireworks Hogmanay 2018 Photo Martin McAdam