

LISTENING COMPREHENSION – ILLEGAL FIREWORKS (2'50 min)

You are going to hear a news report about illegal fireworks.

I) Before listening, read the list of vocabulary and try to guess what the three phrases below might mean (1-2 sentences each).

Vocabulary:

black market display	- an illegal firework
violation	- a person who does something illegal
patrols	- police controls
confiscate	- take away from somebody
cause a lot of havoc	- create chaos and destruction
law enforcement officer	- police man
concede	- admit
humongous	- really huge
deceiving	- misleading

- *light up the night sky*

- *finer are going up*

- *police have handed out 5 tickets already*

II) Now listen to the recording; you are going to hear the recording twice; take notes while listening and then answer the questions below (2-3 sentences each):

1. What will the police do to reduce the number of illegal fireworks?
2. Why are illegal fireworks so problematic?
3. Do police officers usually find the people who have caused havoc with illegal fireworks? Which problems do they have trying to find violators?
4. How much did violators previously have to pay for shooting illegal fireworks? How much is the fee now? How high will it be next year?
5. Is it an excuse if you say that you didn't know which kind of fireworks was illegal? How can you be sure that fireworks are legal?

III) Free writing; choose one of the two tasks and write 180-200 words:

- a) Two teenage boys have been caught with illegal fireworks. Now, a police officer is asking their parents to pay the \$ 750 fine. However, they don't accept that they should pay it. Write a discussion, including reasons for both sides.
- b) Your house has been damaged by illegal fireworks. However, the violators have not been found. Write an open letter to the local newspaper explaining your situation, mentioning the dangers of illegal fireworks and asking the violators to turn themselves in to the police.

You've heard the warnings about the use of illegal fireworks, but still people light up the night sky with their private black market displays. If you're caught, that could cost you hundreds of dollars. In addition to being dangerous, illegal fireworks could be very costly, fines are going up and police are aggressively going after violators. KCRA3's Sharokina Shams is live in Modesto with the price some people will pay for playing with illegal fireworks.

I'm standing outside Modesto's fire station number one. In Modesto, last week law enforcement officers made a promise that they would be aggressively going after people using illegal fireworks. Not only are they doing patrols, but look at this: Already, they're confiscating illegal fireworks and collecting them, hoping they don't get into the hands of people who would use them in neighborhoods and cause a lot of havoc. They say some people just don't realize the damage this stuff can do.

A charred skeleton was all that was left of this North Modesto house last year after illegal fireworks landed on the roof. And this man says his backyard in Stockton was once lit up by a bottle rocket.

They said if it was any closer and there was any wind, my house would have been gone.

In both incidents, no one was ever caught. Law enforcement officers concede: Catching those who set off illegal fireworks isn't always easy.

You know, you can see things and hear things, but by the time you get to them, you know, people will go inside, people will... you know, they're not just gonna stand out front and continue to light them off. So it's kind of a game of cat and mouse.

So this year, they've increased the fines for people found using fireworks like these: They are shown exploding in this video shot by law enforcement officers.

You can see them, I mean, for blocks and blocks, I mean they are humongous, pretty much the kind that you see at a football or baseball stadium.

In Modesto, if you're caught with illegal fireworks this year, you'll pay not 500 but 750 dollars in fines. Already, police have handed out 5 such tickets since Saturday night.

Back out here live, you can see part of the problem is that the packaging can look so deceiving; this brand of fireworks – TNT red devils – are legal, but this particular kind is not legal in California, these are mortars, there is a launcher in there, what I wanna say is these could do a lot of damage. What you wanna look for is that fire martials are "save and sane fireworks"-labeled, that tells you it's legal. And they say if you don't take the trouble to do that, it's not gonna be good enough any more to just tell an officer that you didn't know what was legal and what wasn't. They say next year, that fine is gonna go up again, this time to 1000 dollars.

Live in Modesto, I'm Sharokina Shams.